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AN INVESTIGATION OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF A LOCAL CRISIS:
THE COURTS, THE ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
AND THE COMMUNITY

BY

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B.Sc., Ohio State University, 1951

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Graduate Studies Program of
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1974

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT PAGE

Dedicated to Frances and James Deuchar, my parents;
they valued both education and justice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
THE PROBLEM	3
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	5
CONTRIBUTORY STUDIES	7
METHODOLOGY	13
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT	16
3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING FOR CONFLICT	27
A POSSIBLE SOCIOLOGICAL CAUSE OF CONFLICT	30
DEVELOPMENT OF CONFLICT	31
4. MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA VIEW THEIR WORK DURING THE SCHOOL CRISIS	37
NEWSPAPERS	38
Summary of Information from the Press	47
RADIO	48
Summary of Information from Radio	60
TELEVISION	61
Summary of Information from Television	68
5. MEMBERS OF THE ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM VIEW THE WORK OF THE MEDIA	70
THE PRINCIPALS' OPINIONS	70

Chapter		Page
	THE OPINIONS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION	84
	SUMMARY	95
6.	COMMUNITY LEADERS VIEW THE WORK OF THE MEDIA	99
	NAACP	99
	CORE	105
	PEOPLE POWER	107
	PTA	111
7.	EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES	118
	THE PRESS	118
	RADIO COMMENTARIES	126
	TELEVISION	131
	SUMMARY	132
8.	NEWSPAPER COVERAGE, THE COURTS AND THE SCHOOL BOARD	134
	COMPARISON OF SUBJECT COVERAGE BY PAPER: 1971	138
	COMPARISON OF SUBJECT COVERAGE BY PAPER: 1972	141
9.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	148
	MEDIA AND THE SCHOOLS	148
	MEDIA AND THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS .	157
	NAACP	157
	CORE	159
	People Power	160
	PTA	161
	MEDIA AND THE COURTS	162

Chapter	Page
FINAL CONCLUSIONS	163
RECOMMENDATIONS	168
Recommendations for Improvements by the Media	168
Recommendations for Improvements of School-Media Relations	170
Recommendations for Community Leaders .	171
APPENDIX	172
BIBLIOGRAPHY	175

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Black Residential Areas of Orange County .	28
2. Comparison of Demographic Statistics for the Carver and Pine Hills Areas	31

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Media coverage of a crisis is the main source of information for the majority of members of the community. Crises on national and state levels often have a remote effect on the receivers of media communication, but local crises directly affect their lives.

In the book, Public Officials and the Press, Delmar D. Dunn interviewed reporters to determine their definition of news. One reporter was quoted as stating, "Between two items, I would choose the one affecting the greatest number of readers, or the one in which the greatest number would be interested." Another said, "What touches the most lives."¹

When pressed to indicate what most readers would find interesting, the first elements mentioned were controversy, conflict and attack. Disagreements, acrimony and misunderstandings enhance the likelihood that a situation will become news.

¹Delmar D. Dunn, Public Officials and the Press, (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), p. 25.

Another element mentioned was change. A new course of action, a departure in a new or unexpected direction, or a difference from past practices is likely to be considered newsworthy by a reporter.²

School integration and conflict go hand in hand. From the first nationwide reports of Governor Faubus' rejection of court ordered integration for Little Rock schools, with the consequence of federal troops enforcing the court order in 1957,³ to Governor Wallace's "stand at the school-house door" of June, 1963, integration conflicts were national news.⁴ By 1964 most school integration was proceeding without bloodshed or dramatic confrontation, and so was seldom mentioned in national news items.⁵

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg decision of 1971 in which the Supreme Court decided that busses were to be used to achieve racial integration if it could not be achieved any other way again brought the integration picture into the national news. Protesting parents burned school busses in

²Ibid.

³Alan Harvey Smith, "Events Around the Globe - United States," Book of Knowledge Annual, 1958, ed. E. V. McLoughlin (New York: The Grolier Society, 1958), pp. 170-171.

⁴Alan Harvey Smith, "Events Around the World - United States," Book of Knowledge Annual, 1964, ed. Lowell A. Martin (New York: Grolier, Inc., 1964), pp. 339-340.

⁵Lewis E. Lomax, "History of Negro Protest," Book of Knowledge Annual, 1965, ed. Lowell A. Martin (New York: Grolier, Inc., 1965), pp. 108-109.

such widely diverse places as North Carolina and Pontiac, Michigan.⁶ The reporting of the conflict of transported integration will be investigated in this paper.

THE PROBLEM

On June 15, 1971, the NAACP filed a petition for relief in the U. S. District Court in Orlando, Florida, and requested a new plan for desegregation of Orange County schools. Drew F. Days and Norris Woolfork argued the majority of black students were still in predominantly black schools. Days attacked the makeup of 11 Orange County schools and said that the neighborhood school concept was no longer adequate in the light of recent Supreme Court decisions. Days proposed a plan based on bussing, pairing and clustering of schools to achieve further desegregation. At that time 52 percent of the black students were still in predominantly black schools.⁷ This was the beginning of the conflict in the Orange County schools and the beginning of this study of media coverage of a local crisis.

Melvin DeFleur in Theories of Mass Communication states that the sociological assessment of communication

⁶Kenneth G. Gehret, "Education," The New Book of Knowledge Annual, 1972, ed. William E. Shapiro (New York: Grolier, Inc., 1972), pp. 157-159.

⁷Andy Williams, "NAACP Seeking New Mix Plan," Orlando Sentinel, June 15, 1971, p. 1B.

centers around three broad but fundamental questions:

1. What has been the impact of societies on their mass media? What have been the political, economic or cultural conditions which have led them to operate in their present form?

2. How does mass communication take place? Is mass communication a separate phenomenon from other types of communication? Does it differ in principal or only in detail from more direct interpersonal communication?

3. What has been the impact of the mass media upon society? What influences have they had on the psychological processes, overt behaviors or normative cultures of the people among whom they have flourished?

Most communication research has been directed to the third question.⁸ This study will be directed mostly to the first question. By analyzing the content of the media coverage, comparing that coverage to the minutes of the school board meetings and the court records, then interviewing the participants from the schools, the community and the media, suggestions can be developed for guiding and improving the use of the media by society. Conversely, suggestions will also be developed to aid the members of the media in dealing with school-related crises.

In the preliminary analysis of the situation several unanswered questions arise regarding the communicative relationships between the members of the media and the courts, the schools, and the community:

⁸Melvin DeFleur, Theories of Mass Communication, 2nd ed. (New York: David McKay Co., 1970), pp. 6-7.

1. Did the school administration give an adequate amount of information to the members of the media?

2. Did the members of the community organizations feel that their stand on the issues was completely and fairly represented?

3. Did the Court feel that the necessity for unpopular decisions was adequately explained to the community?

4. Was the flow of information both to and from the media accurate or distorted?

Inadequate media coverage can seriously affect community perception of a crisis. Effects that are potentially harmful to the community can be avoided by the adequate use of mass communication. By determining the adequacy of the media coverage of the recent school crisis in Orange County, Florida, and by determining where and how the coverage was inadequate, perhaps a similar crisis situation could be alleviated in the future.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this investigation is to study the media coverage of the school integration crisis in Orange County, Florida, from June 15, 1971, to December 31, 1972, by:

1. analyzing the available coverage of the print media;

2. interviewing the participants from the Orange

County School System;

3. interviewing the leaders of the involved community organizations;

4. interviewing the members of the media directly involved with coverage of school integration;

5. comparing the media coverage with the school board minutes about integration decisions;

6. comparing the media coverage of the court procedures with the District Court records of Ellis v. the Orange County School Board for the period of the study; in order to determine the completeness of information of the media coverage of the integration crisis. This evaluation will develop suggestions and guidelines to aid future media coverage of school-related crises.

All records, media coverage information, and minutes of the meetings shall be restricted to the time period from June 15, 1971, to December 31, 1972.

The participants to be interviewed from the Orange County School System shall be defined as the principals of the schools named in the court orders for integration, the members of the Orange County School Board, and those administrative personnel responsible for giving information to the media concerning the proposed integration plans, attendance zones, legal proceedings, and transportation procedures related to the Court orders.

The leaders of the community organizations shall be defined as the officers and public relations chairmen of

CORE, the NAACP, the Orange County PTA, Parents Against Bussing, and People Power.

The members of the media shall be defined as the reporters who gathered the information and the editors or news directors who decided what information was to be disseminated.

CONTRIBUTORY STUDIES

Other studies investigate media coverage of national crises, racial conflicts in schools and in cities, conflicts and crises brought about by school integration, and historical studies of school integration but it appears that no other studies have evaluated media coverage of a school integration conflict.

Thomas Jelepiss, Ed.D., of the University of Akron wrote a dissertation titled, An Analysis of Newspaper Editors' Attitudes and Their Bearing on an Ohio School Tax Referendum. He investigated and analyzed the relationship between newspaper editors' attitudes about schools and how these affected voter behavior in a school tax referendum in Ohio.

The results showed that the editors of weekly newspapers have a more favorable attitude toward schools than do daily newspaper editors. There did not seem to be a relationship between the five basic financial variables common to all Ohio school districts, newspaper editors' attitudes, and favorable or unfavorable voter responses at

school tax referendums. Predictions of passage or failure of a school tax issue cannot be made with any safe degree of assurance using only basic financial factors and newspaper editors' attitudes about their schools.⁹

Some studies dealing with conflict caused by school integration are:

1. The Politics of Rage: School Desegregation and the Revolt of Middle America by Lillian B. Rubin, Ph.D., University of California. This is a study of the conflict among whites over school desegregation: upper-middle class professionals versus working whites from the lower-middle classes. Recommendations were made that school boards be elected from districts rather than at large so that all socio-economic classes might be represented on school boards.¹⁰

2. School Desegregation and Community Conflict - An Analysis of Political Behavior as Related to Community Conflict by Rolland William Holland, Ph.D., Michigan State University. This study investigates the relationship of local political structure to the development of conflict. Findings support the thesis that an open political

⁹Thomas Jelep, "Analysis of Newspaper Editors' Attitudes and the Bearing on an Ohio School Tax Issue Referendum" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Akron, 1971).

¹⁰Lillian B. Rubin, "The Politics of Rage: School Desegregation and the Revolt of Middle America: (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California, Berkley, 1971).

structure is more prone to conflict than a closed political structure because the open structure allows more pressure from the electorate.¹¹

3. First Year Desegregation in an Urban High School: A Study of Conflict and Change by Dennis Lloyd Peterson, Ph.D., University of Utah. This paper focused on the facts that lead to the assumption that acts of violence caused changes for the better within an urban school system.¹²

These studies seem to indicate that school integration and conflict go hand in hand.

Historical studies of the progress of integration in a particular school system or location are very common. Two of these are:

1. A Study of Historical and Legal Factors Influencing the Desegregation Process of the Public Schools in Mississippi by Carlie Joyce Shafer, Ed.D.¹³

¹¹ Rolland William Holland, "School Desegregation and Community Conflict - An Analysis of Political Behaviors Related to Community Conflict" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Michigan State University, 1971).

¹² Dennis Lloyd Peterson, "First Year Desegregation in an Urban High School: A Study of Conflict and Change" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Utah, 1970).

¹³ Carlie Joyce Carroll Shafer, "A Study of Historical and Legal Factors Influencing the Desegregation Process of the Public Schools in Mississippi" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Virginia, 1971).

2. Desegregation of Charlottesville, Virginia Public Schools, 1954-1969: A Case Study by Dallas R. Crowe, Ed.D.¹⁴

As the only investigation of media coverage in these studies was to establish the dates of events for historical notation, they will not be described here.

Fredric Ernst Fedler, Ph.D., while at the University of Minnesota, wrote a dissertation titled, Access to the Mass Media: A Case Study. This study is more closely related to the present study in that it investigates the comparative adequacy of media coverage of both "minority" group organizations and "established" group organizations. Spokesmen for both groups admitted they could get more publicity if they wanted it and worked harder for it. They also complained that the stories published by the mass media are simple, sensational and superficial.

The study also suggested that:

1. Newsmen believe that new, conflicting, and controversial issues are the essence of news and are most likely to interest the public.

¹⁴Dallas R. Crowe, "Desegregation of Charlottesville, Virginia Public Schools, 1954-1969: A Case Study" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Virginia, 1971).

2. Newsmen often dwell upon the sensational rather than the significant, and events rather than ideas.

3. Previous studies have failed to grasp the extent and significance of the conflicts between reporters and their employers. Newspaper publishers favor certain policies; reporters try to change the ones with which they disagree.

4. Groups which are (a) actively involved in significant issues, (b) engaged in dramatic confrontations, or (c) advocate novel and controversial ideas obviously receive publicity. Membership in the minority or majority group is of secondary importance.

The idea that minority groups are denied access to the mass media was not supported by this study. Instead minority groups seem to receive a disproportionately large share of publicity. However, the publicity is not always favorable.¹⁵

In the Fedler study the available media coverage was analyzed and interviews were used to supplement the media content analysis. It closely parallels the present study in methodology.

The study that appears most closely related to the present study in methodology is Public Officials and the

¹⁵Fredric Ernst Fedler, "Access to the Mass Media: A Case Study" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1970).

Press by Delmar D. Dunn of the University of Georgia. The primary purpose of the study differs with the purpose of the present study in that Dr. Dunn's purpose was to delineate the role of the press in policy making in state government by describing the work of the press and then tracing how public officials utilize that work.¹⁶

In the present study the same methods will be used to determine how the media did their work, how the school officials perceived that work and whether the events related to school integration were adequately reported.

The methodology of the Dunn study was as follows:

1. The primary source of data for the study was "nonstructured," "purposive," or "focused" interviews. The interviews, conducted by the author, were guided by a set of questions and a list of objectives, but the questions were asked in no set order and were varied in wording where circumstances warranted. The focused interview also permitted respondents greater freedom in relating their experiences and increased the range of available data. To facilitate comparisons among the various categories of officials, care was taken to assure that comparable questions were posed to all officials.

2. The interviews were recorded by taking notes during the interview and transcribing these notes by typewriter as quickly after the interview as possible. The interviews were analyzed by coding responses relevant to each of the dimensions of the press-official relationship included in the inquiry. Phrases from various interviews appeared throughout the study; these were reasonable paraphrases of what was actually said as recorded by note-taking and later transcription by typewriter. The quotations were presented not as conclusive evidence that my lines of reasoning were valid, but rather to supplement and illustrate such lines of reasoning. No names appear with the quotations because respondents were promised anonymity.

¹⁶Dunn, Public Officials, preface.

3. A second source of data was personal observation of the reporter-official interaction during the period of field work. The author attended press conferences and press briefings and the meetings covered by the reporters. On frequent occasions he met reporters and public officials in the capitol corridors and talked with them. These informal discussions supplemented the interview data. In all cases of personal observation, the author took notes at the end of the day, or when appropriate, throughout the day.

4. A final source of information was the regular reading of several Wisconsin newspapers. It was imperative for the author to become acquainted with the written work of the reporters so he could ask them specific questions about their work. He also had to know what they had written so that when the reporter mentioned something related to it, the author would know what he was talking about.¹⁷

METHODOLOGY

The primary source of data for the present study was interviews with the members of the media, the Orange County School System, and community leaders as defined on pages 5 and 6 of this study. Two lists of questions were used, one for the members of the media, and one for school and community leaders. The interviews were recorded on cassette tape unless the subject objected to a recorded interview in which case notes were used and transcribed as soon after the interview as possible. When possible, the results of the interviews were quantified according to question and answer categories.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 175-178.

¹⁸See appendix for lists of questions used.

The next source of data was the available media coverage from the following newspapers: 1. the daily newspapers of Orange County, the Orlando Sentinel and the Orlando Evening Star; (Respondents believed the coverage was the same as they have the same staff and publisher) 2. the Corner Cupboard, a biweekly paper with county-wide coverage; and 3. the Sun of Pine Hills, a weekly paper that covers the area where the main conflict developed.

Data were sought on the content of the radio and television coverage, but it was not available. At Channel 9 the author was unable to talk to anyone but the receptionist, even though appointments and calls had been made prior to the visit.

Channels 2 and 6 permitted interviews of news directors, but both stated that the news programs were recorded on tape that was reused, and the scripts contained only information on the subject, not what was said; therefore these were not included in this study.

WKIS furnished the author with copies of all of Gene Burns' commentaries related to the school integration issue. The news directors of WDBO, WLOF, and WKIS made the same statements as did the directors of Channels 2 and 6 regarding scripts of newscasts. Station WOKB director Mr. Bruce Webb stated that his station did not use scripts or tapes, but only read wire releases for news reports.

Because of this, the news content from radio and television was not included in this study. Mr. Burns'

commentaries were analyzed with the editorials from the press.

The third source of data was the minutes of the Orange County School Board from June 15, 1971, to December 31, 1972.

The fourth and last source of data was the court records of Ellis v. the Board of Public Instruction of Orange County, Florida, United States District Court, Middle District of Florida, Orlando Division, for June 15, 1971, to December 31, 1972.

The media coverage was analyzed in two categories: 1. editorials and commentaries, and 2. reports. The first category was analyzed for attitude, either favoring or opposing the school board actions in the case of the court-ordered integration plans. The second category was compared to the content of the court records and the school board minutes to determine the completeness of the media coverage. They were also analyzed for subjects covered and emphasis.

Chapter 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

After the Emancipation Proclamation became the law of the land during the reconstruction following the Civil War, the people of the South retaliated with the doctrine of "separate, but equal." From 1863 until the turn of the century, there were two main schools of thought regarding the advancement of the American Negro. The first was characterized by Booker T. Washington who felt that education was most important; the other felt that constitutional guarantees were most important. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the South passed the infamous Black Codes, or segregation laws. These statutes called for the complete separation of all public facilities from water fountains to schools, by race. The Negro organizations asked the Supreme Court to strike down these laws, but in the Plessy v. Ferguson¹ decision of 1896, the Supreme Court declared the principle of "separate but equal" to be constitutional.²

¹Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 US 537, 41 L Ed 256, 16 S Ct 1138 (1896).

²Louis Lomax, "History of Negro Protest" op. cit., p. 107.

The South, including Orange County in Florida, proceeded to develop two sets of schools, black and white; they were separate, but not equal. A good example of the separate and unequal facilities developed under this principle can be seen today by a visit to what is now the Zellwood Day Care Center. Improvements have been made since the Zellwood school was integrated and the former black school turned over to the Day Care Center, but a lot can still be seen. The outdoor toilets, ramshackle wooden buildings with wood-burning stoves, a complete lack of modern comfort, were considered unacceptable after the court ordered Zellwood and Taft black schools integrated in 1968.

Besides the unequal status of the black school facilities, there were fewer schools available to the blacks. A friend of the author from Winter Garden said, "I really can't feel sorry for children who have to ride busses. I would have given anything for a bus when I was trying to get from Winter Garden to Orlando so I could go to high school at Jones. We had no high school in Winter Garden and no busses were provided." Phyllis Wheatley in Apopka provided all twelve grades at one location for blacks. In Orange County there was very little "equal" and a lot of "separate."

The Brown v. the Board of Education Supreme Court decision of 1954 recognized that separation is inherently unequal. It directed that all school systems should move

toward integration with "all deliberate speed."³ It produced a fuss throughout the South: produced many calls for the impeachment of the Warren Court and then was essentially ignored.

The author was teaching in an all-white school in Central Florida in 1954 and mentioned the Brown decision to the fifth grade class during a study of the Supreme Court. The class split very cleanly along socio-economic lines in their reactions. The child from a well-to-do family thought it might be interesting; the middle-class children were not too happy about it, but would go along with it if it was necessary; the migrant worker reaction was best expressed by one little freckle-faced boy who said menacingly, "Any Nigra come to school with me, ah'll knaf him!" About 15 heads shook in agreement.

The Brown decision was reviewed by the Supreme Court in 1955 with the opinion that, "The vitality of the principle that racial segregation is unconstitutional cannot be allowed to yield because there is disagreement with it."⁴

There followed a long line of decisions that dealt with various attempts by Southern school boards to avoid

³Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, 347 US 294, 98 L Ed 1083, 74 S Ct 753 (1954).

⁴Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, 349 US 294, 99 L Ed 873, 74 S Ct 686 (1955).

compliance with the Brown decision. In Board of Education v. Taylor⁵ in 1961, the gerrymandering of school district lines to perpetuate segregation was forbidden. Bradley v. the School Board of Richmond⁶ (1965), ruled that delays in desegregating school districts were no longer tolerable. It also directed the integration of faculties as well as student bodies, saying, "It is held improper to approve public school desegregation plans without considering... the contention that faculty allocation on an alleged racial basis rendered the plans inadequate."

In 1965 also, the Rogers v. Paul⁷ decision held that desegregating schools one year at a time so that secondary schools remained segregated was intolerable and ordered the negro students transferred immediately to the high school having the more extensive curriculum from which they had been excluded by reason of their race.

Two decisions in 1968 struck down the Orange County schools "freedom of choice" plan. Under this plan any child in the county could go to any school he chose, or his parents chose, as long as he was able to furnish transportation to get there. This plan effectively kept

⁵Board of Education v. Taylor, 368 US 940, 7 L Ed 2d 339, 82 S Ct 1382 (1961).

⁶Bradley v. School Board of Richmond, 382 US 103, 15 L Ed 2d 187, 86 S Ct 224 (1965).

⁷Rogers v. Paul, 382 US 198, 15 L Ed 2d 265, 86 S Ct 358 (1965).

the schools mostly segregated as few children or parents were able to provide the necessary transportation. The decisions that declared the "freedom of choice" plans unconstitutional were Green v. County School Board⁸ and Raney v. Board of Education.⁹

In Raney v. the Board of Education it was found that a county with no residential segregation still maintained two school systems: one almost entirely white, the other entirely black. Eighty-five percent of the negro students continued to attend the all-black system. The District Court was ordered to retain jurisdiction so that a constitutionally acceptable plan could be adopted and the goal of a desegregated school system would be finally and rapidly achieved.¹⁰

Green v. the County School Board was the governing case that was cited by the District Court in ordering the first integration beyond a token level in the Orange County schools. In Green it was held that since there were reasonable available means such as geographical zoning that promised speedier more effective conversion to a unitary, non-racial school system, a "freedom of choice"

⁸Green v. County School Board, 391 US 430, 20 L Ed 2d 716, 88 S Ct 1689 (1968).

⁹Raney v. Board of Education, 391 US 430, 20 L Ed 2d 727, 88 S Ct 1697 (1968).

¹⁰Ibid, note 5.

plan was unacceptable. Under the "freedom of choice" system used before this decision, only 115 of 740 black students elected to attend the predominantly white system and none of the 550 white students elected to attend the still all-black system.¹¹

The first step in achieving the desegregation of Orange County schools after the Green decision was to integrate the faculties who had also been assigned on a "freedom of choice" basis. The transfer of teachers was accomplished so that all could learn the results as quickly as possible by telecasting the entire procedure over Channel 24, the local ETV outlet. The names of all teachers were placed in fish bowls by race, then drawn out without regard to person or place of residence and re-assigned until all schools had the same ratio of black and white teachers. Hardship appeals were heard but other than proven hardship, no transfers were allowed for the rest of the school year. In subsequent years, teachers were required to fill jobs according to racial quotas to maintain the same percentages of black to white in all schools within the county.

There was much weeping and wailing over the decisions. A few teachers quit the profession, but most reluctantly accepted the transfer. The white teachers, except for a very few who had volunteered to transfer, were

¹¹Green, op. cit., notes 15 and 16.

very reluctant to teach in all-black schools. Only a small percentage of white teachers were required to transfer, but almost all of the black teachers had to leave their schools, their neighborhoods, and their children to teach at a school where they were often not particularly welcome.

For the most part the transfers worked out successfully. Many of the teachers are still at the schools to which they were originally reassigned and apparently are happy there. Some have transferred to better geographical locations, but the racial balance is maintained.

One local principal, however, called his newly assigned black teachers into conference and informed them that they were not welcome there, that he would get rid of them as soon as possible, and that he could not guarantee their safety in the community after dark. For this reason they would not be expected to attend any PTA meetings or other extracurricular activities as assigned to the white faculty.¹²

At the time of the Green decision, 85 percent of the black students in Orange County were attending predominantly segregated schools. Attendance zones were redrawn, some all black schools such as Parramore Street School, Taft Negro School, and Zellwood Negro School were

¹²Interview with two reassigned teachers, 1968.

closed. Because of the racial residential segregation in Orange County, one year later 52 percent of the black students were still attending 11 predominantly black schools.

The pupils from the closed schools were transferred, often transported to the closest formerly all-white schools such as Princeton Avenue, Grand Avenue, Hillcrest, and Blankner. PTA's and Girl Scout troops set up welcoming committees and helped to make the transfers as smooth and trouble free as possible for the transferring students, some of whom had heard and seen reports of violence associated with integration and were frightened.

Jones High was planned as an integrated high school with students from nearby Isle of Catalina subdivision being transferred from Oak Ridge to Jones. Isle of Catalina is an upper-middle-class water-front residential area. Because of the uproar over this proposed integration, Jones was closed as a high school and reopened as a technical school with optional attendance from anywhere in the county. The black academic students were then transferred to Evans High in Pine Hills, Oak Ridge to the South, or Boone in Central Orlando. The Junior high students were either transferred to Carver, which was still all-black, Cherokee, Memorial, or Howard Junior High.

All-black Hungerford High School in Eatonville was also changed to Wymore Tech, a trade school. Students from Hungerford were transferred to either Edgewater High or

Winter Park High School.

On June 1, 1971, the only students bussed for integration were black.

The first case heard by the Supreme Court in the October term of 1970 was the case of Swann v. Charlotte Mecklinburg Board of Education.¹³ The case was argued October 12, 1970, and decided April 20, 1971. In 1968, petitioner Swann moved for further relief from segregation based on the Green v. County School Board decision of 1968.¹⁴ The District Court ordered the school board to provide a plan for faculty and student desegregation. Finding the board's plan unsatisfactory, the District Court appointed an expert, Dr. John Finger, to submit an acceptable plan for desegregation.

In February of 1970, both the board and Dr. Finger submitted plans, and the court adopted the modified plan of the board for the secondary schools and the expert's plan for the elementary schools. The secondary schools were to be desegregated through changing attendance zones, leaving the age ratio the same. The elementary schools were paired or clustered so that nine inner-city black schools were grouped with 24 suburban white schools. Black students from grades one through four were trans-

¹³Swann v. Charlotte Mecklinburg Board of Education, 402 US 1 (1971).

¹⁴Green, op. cit.

ported to the outlying white schools, and white students from the fifth and sixth grades were transported to the inner-city schools.

The Court of Appeals affirmed the District Court's order as to faculty and secondary school desegregation, but vacated the order for the elementary schools. The reason for vacating the decision was that the pairing and grouping of elementary schools would place an unreasonable burden on both the school board and the students involved.

The case was appealed to the Supreme Court which reversed the decision of the Court of Appeals and reinstated the District Court order in its entirety, holding that the order of the District Judge "promises realistically to work, and promises realistically to work now" as adopted in the Green decision of 1968.¹⁵

Four problem areas considered by the Court were:

1. to what extent racial balance or racial quotas may be used...
2. whether every all-black and all-white school must be eliminated...
3. what the limits are, if any, on rearrangement of attendance zones...
4. what the limits are, if any, on the use of transportation facilities to correct state-enforced racial school segregation.

¹⁵Ibid.

The Court defined quotas as a beginning point in planning desegregation. The very limited use made of mathematical ratios was within the equitable remedial discrimination of the District Court.

One-race schools are acceptable in small numbers only until new schools can be provided or neighborhood patterns change.

Drastic gerrymandering of school districts is acceptable in desegregating schools. No hard guidelines can be developed because of differences in local traffic patterns and transportation needs. Clustering and pairing of schools in widely separated locations is also an acceptable remedy for segregation.

Transportation of students should be planned with consideration for the health and safety of the students involved. Limits on time of travel will vary with many factors, but probably with none more than the age of the students.¹⁶

¹⁶Swann, op. cit.

Chapter 3

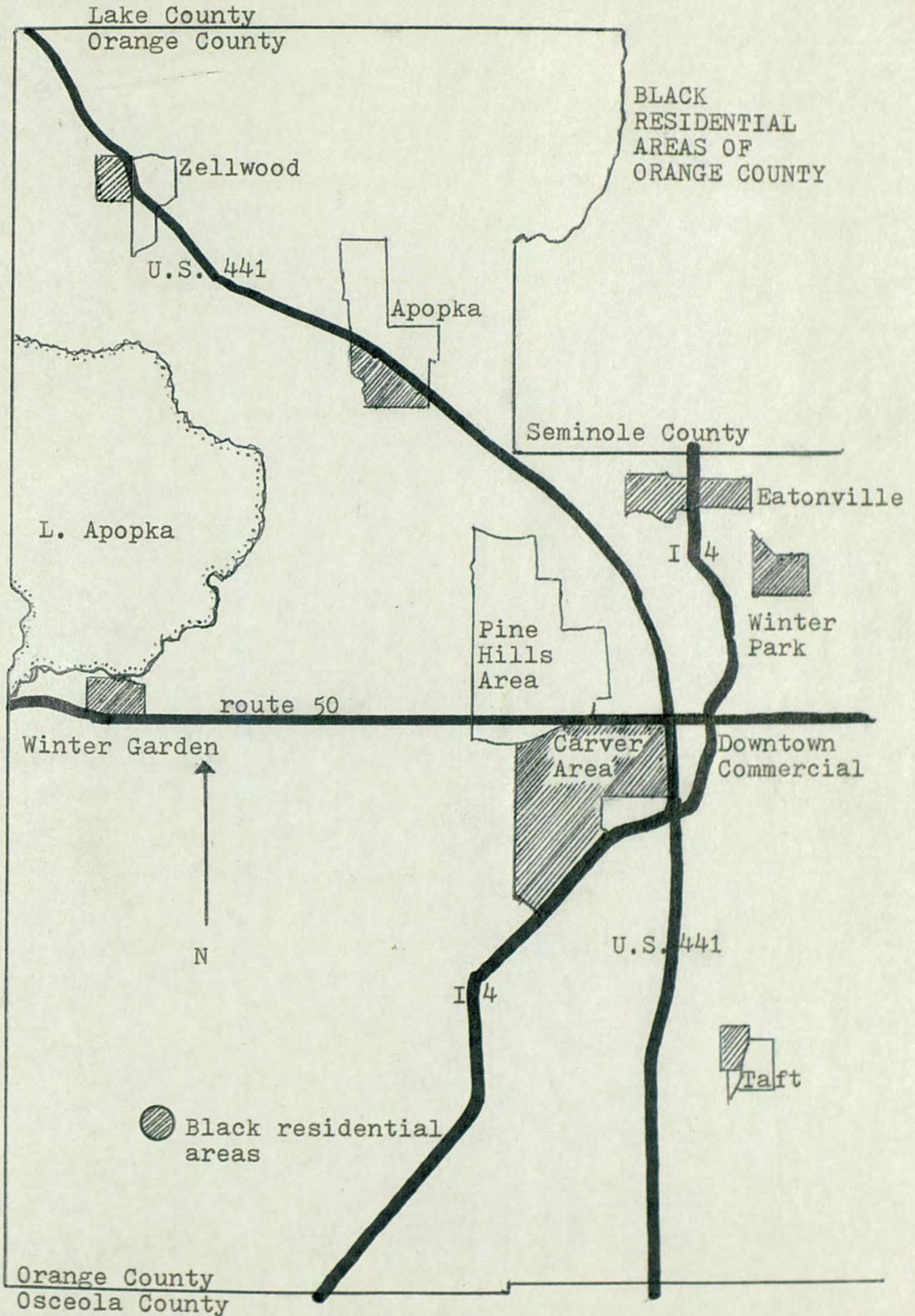
SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING FOR CONFLICT

Integration up to June 15, 1971, was little more than token in the Orlando area. To that point there was very little conflict. A few black schools had been closed and the students transferred to formerly all-white schools. The transition had gone peacefully. Conflict developed after June, 1971, in only one area of Orange County: the Pine Hills area versus the Carver area. These two adjoining areas lie to the west of Greater Orlando (see figure 1).

Pine Hills is an essentially all-white community. There are perhaps three or four black families in the entire area. Pine Hills consists of the subdivisions of Orla Vista, Robinswood, Robinswood Heights, Hiawassee, Evans Village, Meadowbrook, Westwood, Forest Park, Rolling Hills, and Normandy Shores. It is bounded by Clarcona Road on the north, Mercy Drive on the east, Old Winter Garden Road and the Orla Vista City Limits on the south, and Hiawassee and Good Homes Road on the west.

Pine Hills as defined above had a population of 34,355 in the 1970 census and has been growing rapidly ever since. There were 1,860 multi-family dwelling units in the

FIGURE 1



area at that time and 8,988 single-family units. There were 6,474 white-collar workers and 5,209 blue collar workers. The median income per family unit was \$9,457.82 in the same year. There were 4,999 elementary students, 2,445 junior high students, and 1,861 senior high students attending schools within the defined area.¹ In 1970, the students were all-white with the exception of Evans Senior High, which was integrated for the first time in the 1970-71 school year.

What shall be referred to as the Carver area consists of inner-city Orlando, Orange Center, Washington Shores, Richmond Heights, Carver Shores, Malibu Groves, Ivy Lane, and Eccleston subdivisions. It is bounded on the north by Interstate 4, on the south by Gore Avenue and Clear Lake, and on the west by Kirkman Road. From the best of available information, the only white residents of the area are a few drifters in the inner-city area; the rest are all black.

Carver as defined above had a population of 32,203 in the 1970 census, and is growing as rapidly as the Pine Hills area. There are 4,269 multi-family dwelling units and 5,745 single-family dwellings. There were 2,856 white-collar workers and 9,098 blue-collar workers in 1970.

¹East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Statistical Data for the Orlando Urban Area Transportation Study - 1970 Update, (April, 1971).

The median income per family unit ranged from \$8,201 on the north shore of Clear Lake to under \$3,000 per year in the city housing projects. The median for the whole area was \$4,106.05 in 1970. There were 4,999 elementary students, 1,129 junior high students, and 1,119 senior high students attending schools within the defined area. In 1970, all the above students were black with the exception of Jones High, which was an integrated vocational center.

For comparison of the above figures, see Figure 2.

A POSSIBLE SOCIOLOGICAL CAUSE OF CONFLICT

In a preliminary interview with one of the members of the Orange County School Administration staff, it was stated that the primary reason for conflict in integration was fear. When pressed to define this fear, he stated that it was fear of interracial marriage, especially that the white daughters would find the black boys very attractive. He stated that white parents feared placing their daughters in a social situation where intermarriage becomes a possibility.

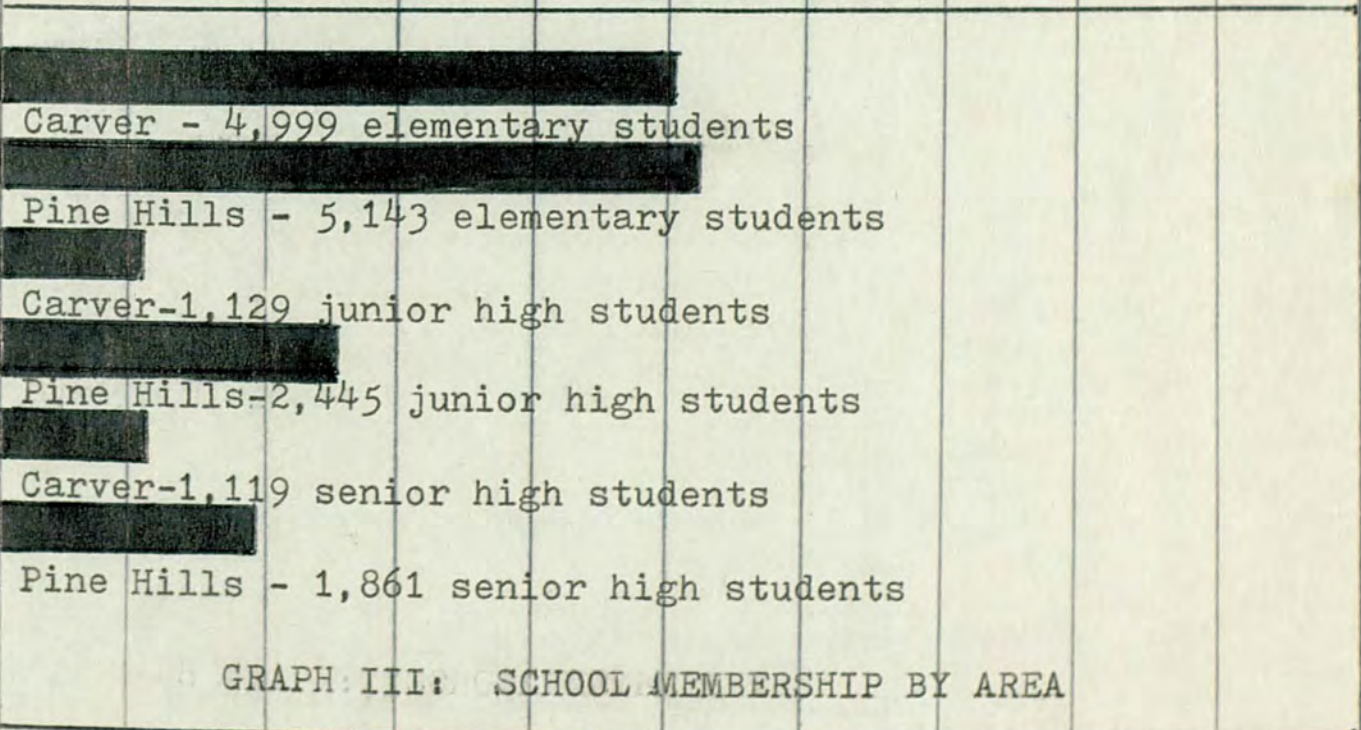
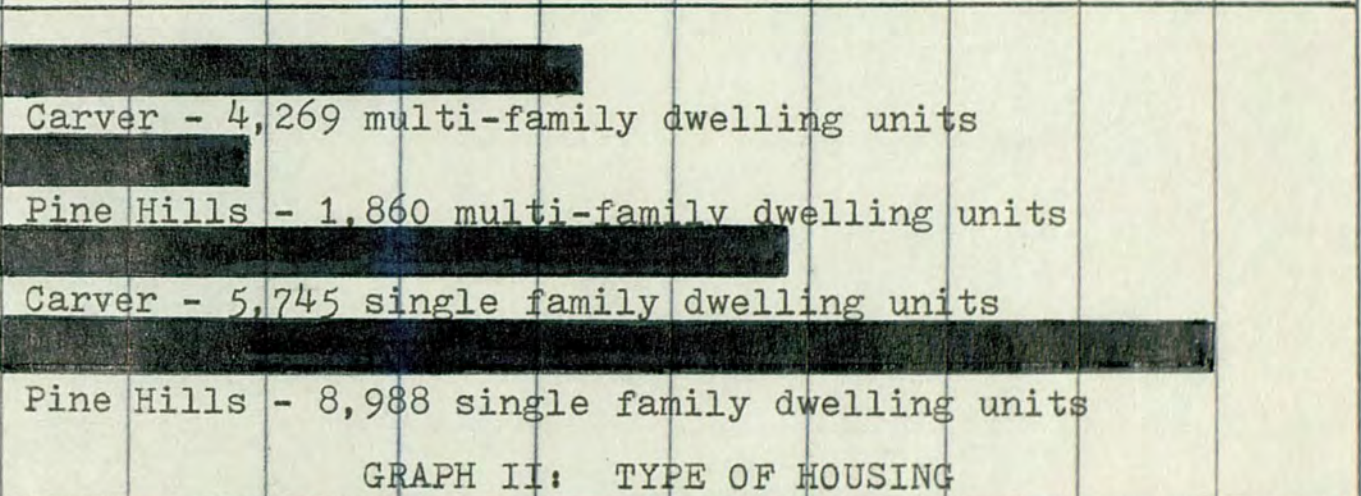
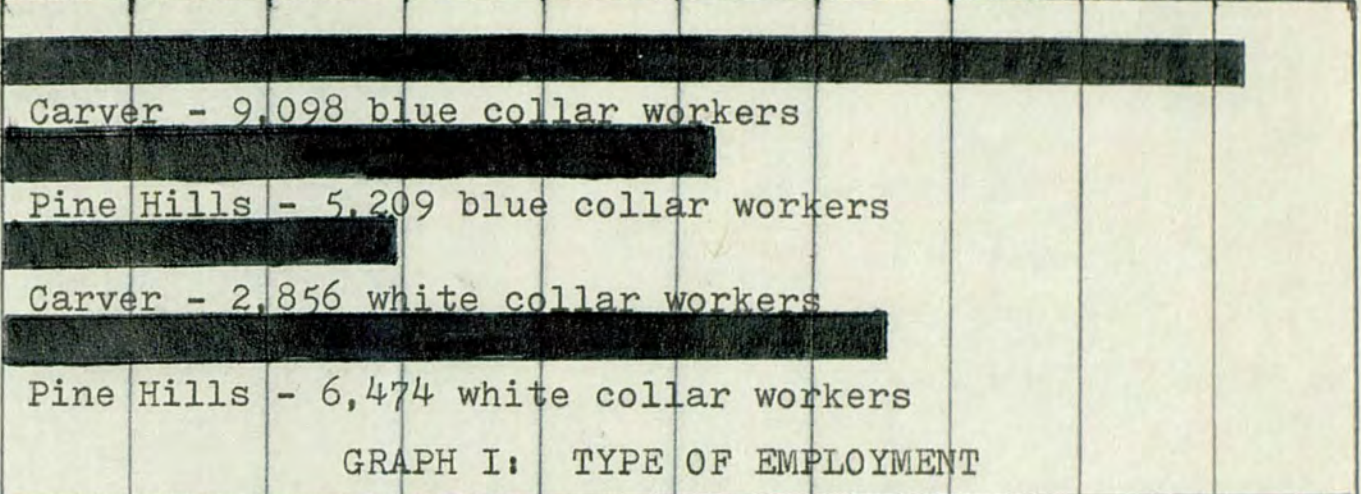
June True Albert studied "The Sexual Basis of White Resistance to Racial Integration," in 1972. This study examined the responses of 716 white men and women to a structured questionnaire to determine whether sex is a differentiating factor in white resistance to integration. It found that white women college students were always more accepting of interracial situations than were white college

FIGURE 2

COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS FOR THE CARVER
PINE HILLS AREAS

POPULATION - 1970: PINE HILLS - 34,355 CARVER - 32,203

1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000



men. Rejection of black males dating and marrying white females is higher than rejection of white males dating and marrying black females, except with white women's attitudes toward intermarriage. Intermarriage and parenthood increased white women's acceptance of marriage between black men and white women, but diminished white men's acceptance of it. The data did not confirm the theories claiming women are concerned more than men about social boundaries and protection of children, but supports the claim that white women are the focus of the white men's fears.²

A possible additional theory that could be derived from this data is that the educational-economic level of college students would make them more accepting of interracial marriage than lower socio-economic classes. This theory would have to be tested for proof.

DEVELOPMENT OF CONFLICT

When the NAACP filed its petition for relief on June 15, 1971, the Orange County School Board took the stand that the racial assignment system that was then in effect was the best system that could possibly be devised and that no further desegregation was possible without destroying the neighborhood school concept completely.³

²June True Albert, "The Sexual Basis of White Resistance to Racial Integration", (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Rutgers University, 1972).

³Ellis v. Orange County School Board, U. S. Dist. Ct. Mid. Dist., Fla., 1215 Orlando Civil, June 15, 1971 - December 31, 1972.

The board had been advised on June 10, by the Court established Bi-Racial Advisory Committee, that a new desegregation plan that would remain stable for ten to fifteen years was needed. The board reaction to that request was to petition the court on June 11, 1971, to abolish the Bi-Racial Committee and restructure it into a new concept. Judge Young denied the motion.⁴

On July 22, 1971, Judge Young ordered the school board to show why seven of the system's schools were still all black, and to prepare a plan for presentation to the Court August 3 for further desegregation if this was found necessary. The board countered with the claim that the residential pattern of Orange County was unique in that there was low population density both south and west of the Carver area, commercial development to the east, leaving only the north, or Pine Hills area through which integration could be achieved.⁵ The board claimed this was an impossible situation.⁶

On July 28, James Higginbotham, the Superintendent of Orange County Schools, requested that the school board adopt a resolution declaring that if the present school integration plan was declared inadequate, the Court would

⁴Ibid., June 11, 1971.

⁵See map p. 28.

⁶Orlando Sentinel, July 23, 1971, Sec. B, p. 1.

have to develop its own plan as the board had done all it could in developing the plan then in effect. Mr. Higginbotham also stated that the board had no expertise in sociological matters that are not related to sound educational principles.⁷

At the hearings on August 3 and 4, Mr. Cascadden, Assistant Superintendent for Orange County Schools, asked the Court if there was some way for HEW to coordinate the building of public housing so it would help rather than destroy attempts at desegregation. The public housing on Ivy Lane, which is all black, destroyed the natural integration pattern of Ivy Lane School and necessitated integration by transportation. At the same hearing Judge Young reprimanded the school board for its refusal to comply with his request for a new desegregation plan. He stated that he was sure the board did not understand the recent Supreme Court decisions in the matter.⁸

On August 16 the Court found that the plaintiffs were entitled to a portion of the relief requested and directed the board to file a plan for the desegregation of seven all-black schools.⁹

⁷Orange County Board of Public Instruction, Minutes of Meeting of the Board, meeting of July 28, 1971. (type-written)

⁸Ellis v. Orange County, court records, August 4, 1971. (typewritten)

⁹Ellis, August 16, 1971.

On September 13, the Court ordered the closing of two all black elementary schools, Holden Street School and Webster Street School; the enlarging of boundaries for Phyllis Wheatley Elementary to include more whites; and the clustering of Robinswood, Carver, and Westridge Junior High Schools. Under the order, three schools, Eccleston, Orange Center, and Washington Shores Elementaries, would remain predominantly black.¹⁰

The white parents from Westridge and Robinswood Junior High Schools joined with the representatives of CORE, a black segregationist group, to form an organization of "Parents against Bussing." A class suit was filed by the organization after an appeal removed Westridge from the order and left Robinswood paired with Carver. The suit claimed that the bussing required under the court order was in violation of Florida Statute 234.01, which forbade unnecessary bus privileges to students who lived within two miles of a school. The suit was decided in favor of the plaintiffs, but as bussing for integration did not fall within the "unnecessary" qualification, the suit had no effect on integration plans.¹¹

Stories of vandalism and attacks on girls attending racially mixed schools were reported to the school board.

¹⁰Ibid., September 13, 1971.

¹¹Ibid., October 18, 1971.

Complaints that the blacks received preferential treatment when discipline was administered were also made. There was record of investigation, but no record of substantiation was recorded.¹²

Because of integration decisions, the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. James Higginbotham, came under attack both from the board and from the public. Hearings were held to consider his reappointment. The demand for space from the public was so great that the hearings were held in Edgewater High School Auditorium. Though reappointed by only a one-vote majority of the board, Mr. Higginbotham resigned to accept the post of Dean of Lake Highland Academy. Dr. Moffet and Mr. Cascadden, assistant superintendents, requested transfers to principalships. The principal of Robinswood Junior High was demoted to the principalship of a small elementary school. The school board attorney, Mr. James Markle, resigned.

Job loss or change was not confined to the school system during this time period. The reporters who covered the school beat for Channel 9 television, the Sentinel Star and the Corner Cupboard papers were either reassigned or took jobs out of town.

When the elementary schools were ordered integrated in October of 1972, the "Council of Parents Against Bussing"

¹²Orange County Board of Public Instruction, Minutes, November 8, 1971.

was reorganized into a group called "People Power." They sponsored a school boycott which successfully kept 50% of the white students out of school for a day and cost the school board several thousand dollars in lost attendance money. There was much talk of organizing several new private schools. Few materialized.¹³

The crisis situation is still simmering, waiting for new developments.

¹³Orlando Sentinel, November 18, 1972, Sec. A, p. 1.

Chapter 4

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA VIEW THEIR WORK DURING THE SCHOOL CRISIS

The media sources that were investigated were:

1. the four papers of the affected area: the Orlando Sentinel, the Orlando Evening Star, the Corner Cupboard, and the Sun of Pine Hills; 2. four radio stations: WDBO, WKIS, WLOF, and WOKB; and 3. three television stations: Channel 2, WESH-TV; Channel 6, WDBO-TV; and Channel 9, WFTV.

The staffs of WESH-TV and WDBO-TV were very cooperative. The staff of WFTV also sounded cooperative in telephone conversations, but from seven phone calls to officials of WFTV requesting interviews or other information, no information was received that was relevant to this study. Appointments were not kept, or there was no one present able to give information. In five visits to the WFTV studios, three for definite appointments, the author was unable to get past the receptionist. Therefore no information relating to Channel 9 coverage is included in this chapter.

NEWSPAPERS

The first person interviewed from the Sentinel was Mrs. Dorothy Madlee, who covered school news for most of the period of this study.

To the first question, "What determines the importance of school news for inclusion in your reports?", Mrs. Madlee answered that the press could not ignore the protest and conflict engendered by the school integration crisis, because it is not in the public interest to avoid reporting stories of conflict. She specified that she did not use all of the inflammatory language from the school board meetings because the use of it would serve no purpose and could do harm.

Mrs. Madlee believed that the basic causes of conflict in the school integration crisis were parents who did not want integration, and school board members who were pretending that they could change the Court-ordered integration plan.

The Sentinel reporters who were assigned to the School board and the Court for coverage of the Ellis case included Andy Williams, Tom Hinkle, Dorothy Madlee, Judy Huggins, Chris Nelson, Fred Talbott and Denise Lang of the Sentinel West.

In answer to the question, "Were there any problems in obtaining the necessary information for your reports?", Mrs. Madlee replied that she gathered most of her infor-

mation from the meetings and hearings concerning the Ellis case integration proceedings. She did not attempt to interview many people because this might affect her objectivity. As she covered mostly meetings and hearings, there was no problem with adequacy or accuracy. If she needed further information she was usually able to obtain it either from Mr. Higginbotham or one of the deputy superintendents.

Two other Sentinel reporters, when asked if they covered the school board news replied, "Absolutely not!" and, "I don't want my tires slashed." Mrs. Madlee, however, stated that she had had no unpleasant repercussions from her school board reporting.

She stated that she was not familiar with the coverage furnished by any other medium.

When asked if any participants in the integration conflict were trying to control the media for their own purposes, she commented that when Mr. Shaffer would call the Sentinel with a sensational news item he would hang up if he was connected with Mrs. Madlee. He didn't like the way she handled his news releases. She also commented on the split in the board membership on the majority of issues. Mr. Berryman, Mr. Shaffer and Mrs. Collison would usually vote against the rest of the board. Each side tried to present its ideas in the most favorable light. In spite of the efforts to achieve favorable reports, she did not feel that she had received any undue pressure from the

community concerning her school board reports.

Mrs. Madlee felt that the media had accomplished the task of calming the situation, and that without the kind of reporting it received, the situation could have been much worse. She felt that both the Sentinel and the Star had provided excellent coverage.

Ms. Denise Lang is the editor of the Sentinel West, a regional section that is in the Sunday and the Thursday editions of the Sentinel. The news is concerned with the West Orange County Communities of Apopka, Winter Garden, Ocoee, Clarcona, Windermere and Pine Hills.

The importance of school news for inclusion in the Sentinel West is determined by two factors: 1. How many residents of the West Orange area will be affected and 2. how they will be affected.

When asked what was the basic cause of conflict in the school integration process, Ms. Lang said that from talking to the residents of the area who were involved in the transfers, she believed that the main cause of conflict is the loss of the right to decide which school your child will attend. People bought houses in a particular area with the understanding that their children would be attending certain schools, and now their children must attend other schools. People resent being told that their children must be bussed across town to a school not of their choosing.

Ms. Lang has assigned Sharron Bolser and Carol

Anderson to the coverage of school news in West Orange County.

Ms. Lang received very good cooperation from the school officials and the various organizations in West Orange, such as People Power. As to the adequacy and the accuracy of the information received, she had to rely on what the experts at the County School Board said in regard to official school news. If the information came from individuals, any opinions or facts were double checked before including them in a story.

Other sources of information that Ms. Lang used were the Sentinel files and the backlog of information in the Sentinel offices.

Neither Ms. Lang nor her reporters had received any unpleasant repercussions because of their reports on school news. Neither had they received any obvious pressures to control the content of the reports.

On the subject of coverage by other media, Ms. Lang said that she sees them infrequently, but has found that the west side of Orange County, especially Winter Garden and the Winter Garden Times, are more concerned about their needs for new schools than they are concerned about possible integration. Of the television and radio coverage, WKIS and Gene Burns were the best, in her opinion. "Mr. Burns is really on top of the situation."

Ms. Lang believes that the media have influenced the course of events by announcing ahead of time when an

issue of interest would be discussed at a school board meeting. "Gene Burns, more than other members of the media, has influenced many people to attend the school board meetings. The Sentinel West has tried to give an accurate account of what will occur. At times there have been over 200 persons at the school board meetings because of prior publicity in the media. Any elected official is going to pay attention when 200 interested constituents arrive because they are interested in the proceedings."

Mr. Joseph J. McGovern, Managing Editor of the Sentinel Star was contacted by the author for aid in obtaining other interviews with Sentinel staff members. Mr. McGovern stated, "Furthering your academic career will not help the Sentinel one bit. I do not want anyone interviewing any of our reporters. We have a company policy forbidding such practices, and there will be a notice on the bulletin board to that effect in five minutes." When he was asked if it was permissible to contact the reporters privately, he said, "If they talk to you and I find out about it, they don't work here any more." There were no further efforts made to contact more members of the Sentinel staff because of possible danger to their jobs.

Mr. Donald Rider is the editor, publisher and main reporter of the Sun of Pine Hills, a weekly newspaper devoted to items of special interest to the people of the Pine Hills, Robinswood, Orla Vista, Westwood, Forest Park, Rolling Hills and Meadowbrook areas.

In answer to the question concerning the criteria for news in his paper, Mr. Rider stated that he determined what news to include by the number of people affected in the greater Pine Hills area.

Mr. Rider considered the main source of conflict to be, "The fact that a situation appears intolerable before it happens, then there is unrest, trouble, alarm. After awhile people find it isn't as bad as they thought. The integration situation is good now."

There were problems for Mr. Rider in obtaining the necessary information from the school administration. They were so busy that they frequently could not be reached. Sometimes he felt that they were being evasive because they did not know what to do or say in a certain situation.

On the accuracy and adequacy of information, Mr. Rider said, "People tell their own versions. You have to balance one side against the other - the truth usually lies somewhere in between." On the reports printed about children being abused, he said, "I doubt that it was all true. The parents were the only willing spokesmen, and of course some of them wouldn't talk either. The school system had its own security police who dealt with these matters; Col. Lowe was the spokesman for them. I went to the Superintendent, Mr. Higginbotham, but he probably got his information from Col. Lowe. I talked to the principals, Mr. Hooper and Mr. Howard too, trying to get adequate information on the subject of child abuse." Mr. Rider stated

that he also talked to school board members and parents. He always cross-checked information received from parents.

When asked if he believed the media had affected the situation, he said that parent reaction was influenced by what they saw and read and heard, but he believed that the effect was more reassuring than alarming.

Mr. Rider emphasized that he believes in full coverage of the news; that it is necessary to give all the facts as far as they can be obtained; and then trust in the civilization of people to react properly.

Mr. Ernest Edward McCarthy, the editor of the Corner Cupboard, said that he was not sure how much information he could supply as the members of his staff who covered the school integration crisis, Mr. George Liedel, Linda Lord, and Miss Karen Balmer, were no longer with the Corner Cupboard.

The importance of news for inclusion in the Corner Cupboard is determined by the appeal of the news to their patrons. They try to concentrate on the Winter Park and Orlando metropolitan areas.

In Mr. McCarthy's opinion, the conflict in school integration is caused by too much at one time. There should have been more moderation, giving those who would be rejected by the integration of the schools a chance to find other answers. They could have eliminated the problems individually, not as groups.

His reporters, especially Linda Lord and George

Liedel, were knowledgeable about the school system and governmental procedures. He did not state how they obtained this knowledge or by what criteria he judged their competence. He felt that too many young reporters are lacking in knowledge of political procedure.

When asked about problems in obtaining information he stated, "When something is controversial you always have the feeling that some people, especially elected officials, will not talk about it. Mrs. Marion Ryan and Mrs. Barbara Polsley had that feeling and they dug for their own information, then passed it on to us. Brantley Slaughter who became a school board candidate was another person who would sit in those long school board sessions, then would tell reporters his impressions. He knew the board was holding meetings when they didn't want the public around. Not this board, but the one before, felt that anything out of the public eye was less trouble. Mr. Higginbotham and the superintendent before him had the idea that it was good to hold conferences back in their offices that were off the record. Reporters were invited in if they wouldn't cover it. I wouldn't let my reporters attend those sessions. If they found out the same information from another source, they would be sealed; they couldn't report it. If they didn't attend those 'off the record' sessions and found the same news they would have a good exclusive story and a worthwhile story. Reporters have no right to receive information that they can't use. If it is

not withheld for the public interest, such as preventing a riot, then the public should know. I believe it is better to lay it on the line. If the public knows the whole truth it is less likely to be violent than if it only receives half truths and can't trust anyone."

Mr. McCarthy felt that his best sources of news concerning school integration were Mrs. Barbara Polsley, Mrs. Marion Ryan, the school board attorneys and the members of the school board. He felt that he received especially good cooperation from the attorneys in the case.

Mr. McCarthy was not aware of any unpleasant repercussions from the reports on school integration. He said, "They leave me pretty well alone. I have sometimes been sued for libel. If I was at fault I immediately printed a retraction, if not I ignore it. You're always pretty safe in that area as long as you know what you are doing." He did not indicate that the libel suits had been connected with the integration of schools.

Mr. McCarthy did not consider himself competent to comment on the coverage supplied by the other media. The purpose of his paper is to supply a different voice in the community, therefore he did not pay much attention to what the other media were saying.

When asked if he felt that the media had changed or influenced the events in the school integration, Mr. McCarthy replied, "I hope so, but I really couldn't say. I hope if we did nothing else, we gave the black people a better

voice than they would have had without us.

When asked for suggestions for better coverage in the future, he replied that the public needs general information about the public schools, but the interest is not as great as it was before so many people put their children into private schools. A lot of people will still not accept integration because it was not gradual."

Summary of Information from the Press

The importance of the news on school integration was determined by conflict, the number of readers affected, and the public appeal of the news.

The conflict in integration of the schools, in the opinion of the editors and reporters, was caused by parents who would not accept the court decision, parents who felt that their rights were violated, parents who felt that enough time had not been allowed for integration, and who perceived the changes as worse than they were.

Two individuals had experienced difficulties in obtaining information and two did not experience such difficulties. It should be noted that the two who did not experience difficulties were reporters from the major daily papers; the two who did experience difficulties were the editors of minor papers.

Mrs. Madlee and Ms. Lang stated that they got most of their information from the school board meetings and from occasional conversations with school officials. Mrs. Madlee even stated that she avoided talking to school officials

for fear it might prejudice her reporting. She got her reports mainly from the school board meetings.

When asked about unpleasant repercussions, the two reporters experienced none, but the two editors had experienced verbal unpleasantness.

All who were interviewed felt that their reports had in some way influenced the course of events.

Three individuals said that they could not comment on the coverage by the other media, one individual said that radio station WKIS had done the best job, especially through the efforts of Gene Burns.

There were no real suggestions for improving coverage except to emphasize that all sides should have complete coverage.

RADIO

Mr. Bruce Webb, the station manager of WOKB, a black-oriented radio station serving Central Florida, reported that his station had no news director or news staff. He said reports were read from the wire services, but no efforts were made to investigate or report news of local interest beyond reading what came over the wire. Station WOKB, as are all the other media sources in this study, is white owned.

Mr. Jerry G. Gentleman is the reporter responsible for WLOF coverage of school news. He was hired partly on the strength of his experience in covering school news in Pensacola and makes the decisions on what has news value for broadcast presentation and what events shall be covered.

Mr. Gentleman stated that, until recently, the school board had not received adequate coverage; not only from WLOF, but from other media in the area. The school board business probably affects more people directly than the county commission and the city council combined. Therefore WLOF was placing a heavy emphasis on school board business in its news reports.

The cause of conflict, in his opinion, is mainly prejudice. In interviewing members of People Power and other individuals, what came through was just prejudice. From the school board, "Mr. Berryman's comments are of a racial nature. He doesn't believe that blacks are capable of doing many things. Other board members who have a prejudiced outlook are Mrs. Lee Collison, and Dan Blackwelder. I believe that Ethel Lyon Kennedy, Bill Barnes, Lee Davies and Ray Bassett are very moderate in this area. Coming from Pensacola, which is actually Alabama, I was surprised to find that Orlando is more racially biased than Pensacola. Then there is another group of parents who say 'If the quality of education is not equal, then my child is being taken from a good school and being placed in with students who have been proved by test scores to be inferior students.

Obviously my child cannot benefit from that.' Parents fear discipline problems. Parents also transfer their own animosities to their children who otherwise would get along in their new schools."

When asked if he had experienced any difficulties in obtaining information, Mr. Gentleman replied that, when dealing with Dr. Ney, getting information is always a problem. Dr. Ney made many people angry because he presented his integration plan at the last minute with no provisions for discussion or amendment. The board had to either accept it or reject it at that time. Marion Ryan and others who attempted to offer alternate plans were unable to get information that was necessary for the formation of their plans. Ryan's plan was the best educationally; Shaffer's was not good; Berryman's plan was dubbed the "bus the nigger" plan at the media table. These plans could all have been better if the administration had given out more information.

Other sources of information used by Mr. Gentleman were interviews with CORE and interviews in the black community. CORE openly opposed bussing, and the black community was not enthusiastic about it, but felt that it was the only way to bring its schools up to standard; that until the schools are mixed, there is no equality.

When asked about unpleasant repercussions from his school reports he said, "Not really. I started a minor fury one evening at a People Power meeting when I said very

bluntly that I didn't agree with them. Barbara Polesley and Mike Kelly extricated me from it."

When asked about pressures to control or change his reports he replied that he hadn't even received any complaints from either the school board or People Power which would indicate that either he had them both buffaloed or else he hadn't done his job well enough. "If you don't get complaints from both sides it sometimes means you haven't done your job well enough."

On the subject of influence by the media, Mr. Gentleman stated that the media had no effect on the integration plans or on the acceptance or rejection of the plans. "The only thing that I believe was really determined by the media was the rejection of Rev. John Butler Book as the leader of People Power. (Rev. Book is a fundamentalist Pastor of the Northside Church of Christ, Maitland, Florida.) The combination of Gene Burns' commentaries, the newspaper reports, and the advice of the members of the media, was responsible for removing Rev. Book from leadership."

Mr. Gentleman stated that he had withheld inflammatory statements not so much because of a moral judgment as because of a news judgment. The statements were generally absurd in that they were threats that did not carry the intention of fulfillment. They were empty expressions of anger. The Rev. Mr. Book made several statements that bordered on inciting to riot. His statements were used

because they were serious statements of his purpose.

On suggestions for improving the coverage of schools, Mr. Gentleman stated that the closed atmosphere of the administration of Dr. Ney was not conducive to improving the situation. The new lines of communication being opened by Dr. Deck should go a long way toward improving the situation. The open houses planned by Dr. Deck are very good. If discipline can be maintained in the schools and we have no reports of major incidents, then things should improve steadily.

When asked if he felt that there was anything that hadn't been covered he stated that he did not believe that the black community side of it had been covered adequately, as usual. We needed more information from the black community.

Mr. Jim Martin, the news director of WDBO-radio, stated that wide public interest was the main factor in determining whether school news was important enough for inclusion in reports.

When asked about the basic cause of conflict in integration, Mr. Martin stated that there are two separate factions opposed to bussing and they are both responsible for the conflict. One faction is made up of the racists who are opposed to any integration; the other faction is composed of those who do not want their children sent out of the community to school.

At WDBO there are five men on the news staff and

process had put great pressures on the media. "There were emotional parents and emotional children. There were charges and counter-charges that were just based on emotions by a number of Pine Hills parents that were not carried on the radio because they were hysterical. They felt that we were not carrying the full story. You have a group of irate mothers screaming about black children going into a school, you cover it once, then it is no longer news. It can't be repeated every day." This contradicted the denial of pressures above.

Also Mr. Martin mentioned the problem of selective perception of people who hear what they want to hear instead of what has been said.

Mr. Bert Baumann, news director for radio station WKIS, said the basic cause of conflict in school integration is fear of the unknown. White parents will say that they believe in integration and black rights, but it is easier to say that than to carry through with it when your children are involved. Race is an emotional issue and children are an emotional issue; when the two are combined it becomes an explosive issue. White parents are afraid to have their children taken to the black schools because they do not know what they are like.

Mr. Baumann stated that he tries to put the stories in the order of the broadest effect. School news is important because it affects just about everyone in some way.

Pat Flynn was the school board reporter for WKIS.

CORE, were most cooperative.

On the subject of pressures to control the news, Mr. Martin said that the only way participants in any news story can attempt to control the news is by making phone calls and requesting reports of certain events. Since the WDBO-radio policy is to determine news by the priority of events, he would not recognize such calls as pressure.

Mr. Martin did not believe that the news media had influenced events in the integration story locally. The decisions were made in the courts, the school board implemented those decisions, and all the media did was report both the decisions and the implementation, he said.

When asked for suggestions for improving the coverage of school news, Mr. Martin said that communications had already been improved because Dr. Deck was very cognizant of the news media and the fact that the only way to get information to the public is through the media. Mr. Martin stated that the NAACP case was run out of New York and there was not much we could do in Orange County because the local attorneys were taking direction from New York and there was not much they could say. Reporters were being restricted more and more in the Federal Courts. Tape recorders and video cameras should be allowed at least in the building if not in the courtroom itself. If communication is to be improved, it would have to be within the court system in their relations with the media.

He said that the emotionalism in the integration

process had put great pressures on the media. "There were emotional parents and emotional children. There were charges and counter-charges that were just based on emotions by a number of Pine Hills parents that were not carried on the radio because they were hysterical. They felt that we were not carrying the full story. You have a group of irate mothers screaming about black children going into a school, you cover it once, then it is no longer news. It can't be repeated every day." This contradicted the denial of pressures above.

Also Mr. Martin mentioned the problem of selective perception of people who hear what they want to hear instead of what has been said.

Mr. Bert Baumann, news director for radio station WKIS, said the basic cause of conflict in school integration is fear of the unknown. White parents will say that they believe in integration and black rights, but it is easier to say that than to carry through with it when your children are involved. Race is an emotional issue and children are an emotional issue: when the two are combined it becomes an explosive issue. White parents are afraid to have their children taken to the black schools because they do not know what they are like.

Mr. Baumann stated that he tries to put the stories in the order of the broadest effect. School news is important because it affects just about everyone in some way.

Pat Flynn was the school board reporter for WKIS.

There were no problems encountered in obtaining information. The information was adequate and accurate except for some information obtained from People Power. Basically they were expressing their feelings, so it was not exactly a question of accuracy.

Other sources of information used to obtain school news by WKIS reporters are the Orlando Chamber of Commerce education committee, parents of children who are involved, and people who attend the school board meetings regularly.

Neither Mr. Baumann, Mr. Flynn nor Mr. Gene Burns mentioned any unpleasant repercussions from school reporting.

Mr. Baumann stated that he believed all the coverage has been generally good. "Some stations just naturally do a better job than others. Our biggest competitor, WDBO-radio, does not cover the school board meetings regularly. WDBO-TV does an excellent job of covering the school board. In general, though, the coverage is good."

Mr. Baumann stated that all sides are attempting to control the media for their own ends. That is why they are so friendly to the members of the media. A good newsman just determines how he is going to be used.

Mr. Baumann did not experience any efforts to censor or change the reports. He did receive many reactions from both sides.

Mr. Baumann stated that he thought the media had altered events, but he wasn't sure. He felt that media

coverage of Mr. John Butler Book's leadership of People Power prompted much changes of opinion regarding that organization.

On the subject of deleting inflammatory remarks from reports, Mr. Baumann stated that a good reporter knows that nothing is gained by repeating inflammatory statements over the radio. If there is a charge made against someone, the same reporter will check it out to determine if it is true: if it is true it will be used.

Mr. Pat Flynn, also of WKIS, was unable to give time for an interview because of being both a full-time student and a full-time reporter. The notes made during a telephone conversation were not adequate for transcribing into a section of this paper.

The format of the interview with Mr. Gene Burns was slightly different from that of the above interviews. Mr. Burns is a commentator rather than a reporter for WKIS. The content of his commentaries is explored in depth in chapter 7 of this study. After one or two questions from the author, Mr. Burns went ahead on his own without waiting for questions. Of all the members of the media who were interviewed concerning school integration, Mr. Burns was the most knowledgeable about the problems of integration.

Mr. Burns stated that he believed the basic cause of conflict in school integration is the unwillingness of people to accept change. In his opinion it was a small group that actively opposed school integration. Most of

the opposition centered in Pine Hills.

The media do a very poor job of covering education in general, according to Mr. Burns. He believes every media source should have a representative at every school board meeting for background information if for no other reason. Prior to the integration of Carver and Robinswood Jr. High Schools, all media coverage was superficial. They did not live up to their responsibility to uncover the problem before it occurred, then they blew it out of all proportion when the news did break. He stated the reporter from the Sentinel, Mrs. Madlee, tends to write only what she is told by the establishment at the school board. An observer must observe and follow through with their observations. All the media should send informed members to report on the schools.

What has not been adequately reported, in Mr. Burns' opinion, is that the blacks have long been disadvantaged by the dual school system. The black community is divided over the integration problem. The NAACP is forcing the integration of schools through any available means and CORE is opposed to integration and is seeking neighborhood administration of schools. Mr. Burns said the problem in dividing the school district for neighborhood administration is that the facilities and the manpower are also divided. Under the Florida constitution the only way to divide the school districts in that way would be by constitutional amendment. He felt this split in the black

community was very bad.

He said the school board adopted the position that it had been attacked and it did not make enough effort to communicate its position through the media. They were elected as a body of policy makers: they should be arbitrators. Instead they are bogged down in ideological battles and have become part of the problem, according to Mr. Burns. He said Mr. Higginbotham was caught in the middle in the ideological battles. The media never adequately explained his position.

Mr. Burns took a strong stand against Mr. Shaffer in the 1972 school board elections. He felt that the defeat of Mr. Shaffer and his forces was essential to the development of good education in Orange County. In the opinion of the author, Mr. Burns' biting commentaries were a strong factor in the defeat of Mr. Shaffer.

Summary of Information from Radio

This summary will not contain the same amount of answers to each question because Mr. Burns did not answer all the questions.

Three members of the radio medium agreed that wide effect is the determining factor in choosing news for broadcast.

Three mentioned prejudice and fear as the basic cause of conflict in integration; one mentioned unwillingness to accept change.

Three experienced difficulty in obtaining necessary information when Dr. Ney was acting superintendent of schools; one experienced no difficulty.

Two experienced minor verbal reprisals for reports; one experienced no unpleasantness.

Two stated that the rejection of Rev. John Butler Book as leader of People Power was a direct result of media coverage. One said that the media had no effect on events.

Two stated that the media coverage had been very inadequate. One said that it had been good. One declined comment.

Three stated that they withheld inflammatory statements.

Two said that they had received no pressures for change of opinion. One received verbal pressures.

On the subject of recommendations for improvement there was consensus that there should be more openness to the media. Mentioned specifically were the availability of school officials, information from the black community and restrictions in the Federal Court.

TELEVISION

WESH-TV, Channel 2 covers a wide area. It has studios in both Daytona Beach and Winter Park, Florida. Its primary coverage area includes Orange, Brevard, Seminole, and Volusia Counties with fringe coverage reaching as far as

Alachua County on the north and Polk County on the south. Because of this wide area of coverage, events in any of the counties are weighed against events in the others when determining importance for news presentations.

Mr. Dave Walker, the WESH-TV news director, stated that conflict, wide effect and community interest are the determining factors in choosing the subjects for broadcast; basically, new developments that have a wide effect in the communities that are served by WESH-TV. There is a great deal of school board coverage included in WESH news, but all of the school boards from their primary coverage area are included. WESH-TV does not have a reporter assigned to cover all the Orange County School Board meetings and only make the assignment when important developments are expected.

The cause of conflict in school integration is, according to Mr. Walker, the fact that education is an emotional subject and child welfare is an emotional subject. When two or more people disagree on an emotional subject, conflict is inevitable.

No reporter is regularly assigned to cover school board news for WESH. All reporters are expected to cover all types of stories.

The reporters from WESH did encounter difficulties in obtaining necessary information from the school board, or in some instances, obtaining information at all.

Other sources of information used were the local PTA organizations, the League of Women voters, the legis-

lative information, the National Education Association, as well as other local informants.

Because of the emotional intensity of the integration issue, the reporters from WESH experienced verbal threats and obscenities while gathering information. A camera was pushed, but not damaged in one incident.

When asked to comment on the coverage of the other media, Mr. Walker stated that in his opinion the newspapers did the best job because of the flexibility of space inherent in that medium. The electronic media are restricted by the amount of time available for each subject. The electronic media are more of a "headline service". Even a half hour documentary cannot do full justice to an intricate subject. Basically television "whets the appetite" of people who are interested so they will seek more information elsewhere.

The participants do attempt to control the media because each participant in a conflict feels that his view is the proper view; each wants the story presented according to his ideas.

Reactions to the news portion of WESH presentations are usually prompted by inaccurate perception of what is said rather than reaction to the news itself. Reactions to the editorial and commentary portion usually are disagreements with the stand taken and occasionally have been denied in equal time presentations. This was true with the editorial calling for the resignation of the rest of the school board after Harley Tomkins and James Higginbotham resigned.

Mr. Walker believes that the media did affect the course of events, particularly when the editorial stance of the majority of the media was in agreement. However it would be impossible to determine how much the school board or the superintendent were swayed by editorial opinion. The outcome of school board elections was also influenced by the media.

The only type of information that would be censored from the school news reports would be remarks of an inflammatory nature. Information gained in school board meetings under the "government in the sunshine" law that would be detrimental to the public welfare, such as divulging the site of a new school which would possibly raise the cost of the land, is not broadcast. Mr. Walker stated that the hearing before the school board of charges against Mr. Hooper, the principal of Robinswood, was briefly reported, perhaps thirty seconds of air time. None of the details of the charges were given because of possible legal implications if the case was carried further.

When asked about further information that had not been covered in the above questions, Mr. Walker said that the media in this area have been fairly responsible in reporting integration and racial incidents. Obviously staged demonstrations, where a phone call before announced the intentions of creating a disturbance, are handled very delicately by all the media because if such incidents are completely reported they tend to inflame racial

violence. School officials have always had access to radio, television and the newspapers if they had information that they felt was important for the public. The media helped the Orange County School Board implement its integration policies with a minimum of conflict. Things could have been much worse.

Mr. Walker believes that a more objective point of view is obtained by using several reporters to cover one subject, such as the courts or the school board, because when one person covers it he tends to lose his objectivity and become involved in the point of view of the subject itself.

Mr. Walker felt that a more open and frank discussion of problems is important to allay fears and suspicions. When discussing obvious conflicts such as the integration problem, couching remarks in non-committing language, as was done by Dr. Ney, only tends to increase fear and suspicion. If the superintendent is not available someone should be delegated to speak for him.

Mr. Ben Aycrigg, the news director of WDBO-TV was unavailable for interview, but Mr. Todd Persons, the assignment editor, was most helpful in providing the necessary information.

Mr. Persons stated that the importance of school news, and the weight assigned to it in determining air time, is generally based on the previous amount of information given on that subject and the effect that the new develop-

ment will have on the community. The advice of the reporter who covered that story will generally be followed in determining the importance of new developments.

WDBO-TV does not have a regular reporter for school news. Mr. Persons said that there were several reporters who cover school news more than others. They are the ones whose judgment is sought in determining the importance of school news. They are Mr. Chris Schmidt, Ms. Terry Kerr and Mr. Lindsley Wright. These are also the ones sent to cover major school news items.

In Mr. Persons own opinion, the inability of parents to accept change or to change their own ideas is the basic cause of conflict in school integration. He said that from interviews that he has conducted, he believes that students accept the changes much more readily than do the parents.

Mr. Persons said that there were problems in obtaining information from principals because each principal is protective of his school and assumes that unless there is strong evidence to the contrary the problems in that school are minimal. Parents of a child who has had problems see it from their child's point of view. Small incidents are magnified.

There were problems with people who just refused to see the reporters, particularly with the school administration under Dr. Nye. Those who worked for him were reluctant to talk without his approval. Dr. Nye is a very brilliant man in his own field, finance, but is not comfortable in

front of cameras or reporters. There was a problem in getting information from him.

There were also problems related to obtaining information from the Court in the Ellis case. The Judge may not discuss a case that is before the Court. Some of the lawyers would discuss it. Others would not. They did the best they could with what they had.

Other sources of information used by WDBO-TV were People Power, CORE and people from other organized groups on the other side of the conflict. They tried to get both sides before the public.

People with a cause try to keep that cause alive by keeping their cause before the public. Whenever a member of a group is interviewed a judgment must be made as to the validity of the information received.

There were no unpleasant repercussions experienced by the reporters as a result of their activities in covering school integration news in Mr. Persons' knowledge.

Mr. Persons believed that the general coverage by all the media had been good. He stated that the fact that you were able to see all sides of the question by listening to the different points of view expressed in the media was what made it good.

To the best of Mr. Persons' knowledge there had been no pressures toward controlling the news from the community, and he was not aware of the necessity to withhold inflammatory statements.

Summary of Information from Television

The importance of news for presentation is determined by the presence of conflict, community interest, and mainly, wide effect. Neither television station has a reporter who is regularly assigned to school news.

It was stated that all reporters were knowledgeable about school affairs, but there was never any indication given as to how this knowledge was obtained. No training or experience in school affairs other than occasional attendance at school board meetings and interviews of school officials was indicated. The same could be said of the statement by Mr. Martin of WDBO radio.

The conflict in integration is caused by resistance to change.

Both stations had difficulty obtaining information from the school administration when Dr. Nye was acting superintendent. WDBO-TV also experienced difficulty with obtaining information from the lawyers in the Ellis case.

WESH-TV experienced some difficulty with threats, obscenities and pushing in obtaining the news of the school integration.

One informant said that media coverage by the other media was good; one said that the newspapers did the best job because of the availability of space.

Recommendations were that the school administration

should be more open and frank in discussing plans and difficulties.

Chapter 5

MEMBERS OF THE ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM VIEW THE WORK OF THE MEDIA

The members of the Orange County School System who were interviewed for their opinions of media coverage of the integration of Orange County Schools were: 1. the principals of the involved schools, 2. the members of the Orange County School Board during the time of the study, and 3. the administrative personnel who gave information to the media during the same time period.

THE PRINCIPALS' OPINIONS

The principals who were able to give of their time for an interview were Mr. Robert L. Howard of Carver Junior High; Mr. Jewel Hooper of Robinswood Junior High; Mr. Rufus C. Brooks of Eccleston Elementary; Mr. Cecil W. Boston of Richmond Heights Elementary; Mr. James Talbert of Phyllis Wheatley Elementary; and two principals of white elementary schools named in the court order who asked that they not be identified. Some principals were out of town; others were unable to meet the appointments for interviews or refused to make appointments on the grounds that they had no information on the subject.

The answers to the first question, what in your opinion is the basic cause of conflict in the integration

schools, were as varied as the people who answered. The given reasons included ignorance, politics, economics, loss of neighborhood schools and too much publicity.

Mr. Hooper, the principal of Robinswood Junior High at the time of integration, stated, "A minority number of parents who objected to bussing caused the conflict. They were a small group. Some of them were not even affiliated with the school and did not have children there. They felt that we had a good school before and wouldn't go along with the changes."

Mr. Hooper lost his job as principal of Robinswood because of that very vocal minority of parents. He was charged with failing to keep discipline in the school and, after the hearing, was transferred to Cheney Elementary as principal.

Mr. Howard of Carver Junior High chose not to comment on the first question.

Mr. Brooks of Eccleston Elementary said that the conflict was caused by politics and economics. "People have a feeling that it is always the poor who are involved in school integration because these are the people least able to offer resistance. Also the news media have to make a living and it is the 'hot' item that sells the news. This causes sensationalism. Teachers, students and the community have been hurt because of this practice."

The principal of Pine Hills area school No. 1, who wished to remain anonymous, stated that the cause of con-

flict was bussing. The court order that caused children to attend schools in other neighborhoods with different economic and ethical standards was not appreciated by most parents.

The principal of Pine Hills area school No. 2 said that he did not believe there had been any real conflict and didn't expect any.

Mr. Talbert, the principal of Holden Street school which was closed to avoid bussing white children into it, said, "The court order that forced children out of their community caused the conflict. There was too much fanfare; the preliminaries were too sensationalized and not enough facts were presented. The subject was constantly brought before the public with insufficient information."

The second question was: "Please comment on the accuracy, fairness, depth and completeness of factual information for each of the following newspapers: the Orlando Sentinel, the Orlando Evening Star, the Corner Cupboard and the Sun of Pine Hills." One principal felt that the Sentinel and the Star did a fine job, two thought the Sun did well and one praised the Corner Cupboard. Two believed that both the Sentinel and the Star were too sensational in their reports. Two principals were unfamiliar with the Corner Cupboard, and one was unfamiliar with the Sun. Both the Sun and the Corner Cupboard were considered inaccurate by one principal.

Mr. Hooper said that the Sentinel and the Star did

a fine job in reporting the conflict surrounding the integration of Robinswood and Carver Junior High Schools. He believed they were cooperative and didn't magnify the problems. "They called and checked everything," he said. "On the day that we supposedly had the riot, some white boys had a disagreement with some black boys. The white boys called their friends from Evans (a senior high) and they came roaring in on their motors. They walked up and down shouting threats as they waited for the busses to come in. Some white students got hysterical and ran home to report a riot. Their parents called the sheriff and they sent several squad cars out. That caused more problems because the teachers and I heard the students say things like 'The fuzz is here - let's give them something to see.' The Sentinel called, and when I told them that nothing had happened, just a lot of threats, they didn't think it was worth printing. That was good. They would call, but not come out because they didn't believe it was anything. They were cooperative and didn't blow up the issues. The only reporter who ever did go into a classroom was a Sentinel reporter who did a Florida Magazine special report on bussing. None of the others went into the classroom.

The Sun was inaccurate. There was no investigation before printing. They gave poor, unfair publicity that was not in the best interests of the community.

The Corner Cupboard and the Sentinel West (a local news supplement to the Orlando Sentinel) did not check their

charges. This made the parents more uneasy."

Mr. Howard of Carver had only praise for all the media in spite of very inflammatory headlines in both the Sun and the Corner Cupboard. When asked if he was sure he thought the Sun and the Corner Cupboard did a fine job, he restated, "Yes, a fine job." On specific issues he said that the Sun of Pine Hills did a fair job considering the information it received. He also stated that he was familiar with the coverage given by the Sun to events at Carver.

On February 3, 1972 the Sun carried the headlines, "Parents Nix Workshop. Council of Parent's Turn Thumbs Down on Sensitivity Training at Carver."¹ The article was about the human relations workshop planned by the CTA to increase understanding between the parents and students of Carver and Robinswood. The Parents Council executive board said the invitation was, "An attempt to break down the opposition to forced bussing." Mr. Shaffer of the school board was quoted as saying, "The whole idea is to break down your will."

On March 2, 1972, the Sun headlines read, "Council Reveals Student Beatings. Boy unconscious, girl with dress torn off by black children."²

¹The Sun of Pine Hills, February 3, 1972, p. 1.

²The Sun of Pine Hills, March 2, 1972, p. 1.

The article told of papers with black and white rabbits used to foster integration at Carver, of average children making the honor roll because of low academic standards, and of teachers who were afraid to discipline their students. It accused the daily papers of "covering up a bad situation, using censorship and lying to the people." There were similar articles printed in the Sun on October 14, 1971; November 11, 1971; April 13, 1972; May 11, 1972; May 18, 1972; May 25, 1972; and June 1, 1972.³

The Corner Cupboard on February 28, 1972, said, "Carver Boils, But Calm Heads Getting Into the Act."⁴ That headline was followed by details of numerous complaints of beatings, robbery, poor teaching and low level classes.

On April 13, 1972, the headlines on page one of the Corner Cupboard read, "Black Students Accused of Assaults and Robberies." In the article the charges were detailed. One man was refusing to send his son to school. On page 13 of the same issue were the headlines, "Parents Claim Boycott Only Answer to Carver."⁵ Superintendent James Higginbotham was quoted as stating that Carver would be closed.

³Sun of Pine Hills, October 14, 1971; November 11, 1971; April 13, 1972; May 11, 1972; May 18, 1972; May 25, 1972; and June 1, 1972.

⁴Corner Cupboard, February 28, 1972, p. 1.

⁵Corner Cupboard, April 13, 1972, p. 1, 13.

Mr. Howard stated that he was familiar with the coverage of both the Corner Cupboard and the Sun of Pine Hills. He considered the coverage of the Sun, "Fair. Its reports were semi-shallow as they did not get both sides of the issue. I did not talk to reporters from the Corner Cupboard. They neither helped nor harmed the situation. The name of the game is to sell newspapers, so they use the school system as a scapegoat. The Sentinel was fair - it gave true reports."

When asked about the Star, Mr. Howard said that he considered them both to be the same newspaper.

The Sentinel did not carry information about any of the Sun headlines quoted above. It also did not cover the story detailed in the February 28th issue of the Corner Cupboard. The April 13th story about the possibility that Carver may be closed was covered with little mention of the charges detailed in the Corner Cupboard.

Mr. Boston, the principal of Richmond Heights Elementary School, said that he considered both the Corner Cupboard and the Sun of Pine Hills to be, "Just headlining." In other words, they printed only the sensational stories that carried shocking headlines. The Sentinel, in his opinion, did fairly well.

He said, "What's said and what they write are nine out of ten times different. They came down here to interview me; they wanted me to criticize the board. I work for the board. I'm not about to criticize it. I will say this

for the newspapers. The coverage now is much better than when the Brown decision was first announced. They do a better job now. What's said to us at a meeting, though, and what appears in the paper are frequently two different things."

Mr. Brooks of Eccleston said, "This town has only one major newspaper. One time they'll come up with a positive point of view; the next two or three times they will come up with the negative point of view. In all cases, not all sides are represented. They don't cover the blacks as well as the whites. Hot, sensational headlines sell the newspapers. In recent years, though, there has been a tendency for the major newspapers to curtail the sensational; an effort not to magnify the problems."

The principal of Pine Hills school No. 1 said that he did not feel that school board news was any more slanted than news was generally slanted in the Sentinel. He expressed a general doubt concerning all reports carried by the Sentinel.

He did not read the Corner Cupboard.

He felt that the Sun of Pine Hills did a good job of trying to get the facts before printing a story.

The principal of Pine Hills school No. 2 said that he never read any reports of school news because he knew more about what was going on in the school system than the reporters knew. He has little time for reading and only reads to obtain information he does not already have.

Mr. Talbert felt that there was too much sensational news in the papers before the integration began. All three papers, the Sentinel, the Sun of Pine Hills and the Corner Cupboard were all too sensational in their coverage. Too many stories were printed that were not checked for accuracy and the reporters had no first hand information. He felt that there was almost a conspiracy to prevent integration from succeeding.

Question three concerned the work of the television stations. Mr. Hooper believed the television coverage was fair. "At least they did not make the situation worse. Channel 6, WDBO-TV, did interview the parents and the principals. It volunteered to help. Its reports were not alarming. The other stations just hit the surface enough to create a suspicious attitude."

Mr. Howard believed that the television coverage was fair because the reporters from the television stations sought his point of view.

Mr. Boston believed that channel 9, WFTV, did the most complete job of reporting the news of integration. WFTV was awarded the School Bell Award for service to the schools. "Channel 6, WDBO-TV, is conservative, and channel 2, WESH-TV, because of its coverage of Daytona Beach and Orlando spent less time on Orange County problems."

Mr. Brooks said, "Television stations have to be more direct. Pictures underline what they say, and they can't afford not to tell the truth. They are forced to be

more fair, to fall more in line than the newspapers. Television only brings you what you can see."

Mr. Talbert took an opposing view when he said, "Television took shots that made things look bad - no shots of good things - always negative, never positive."

The principal of Pine Hills school No. 1 was not familiar with what channels 2 or 9 had to say about the integration of schools, but felt that channel 6, WDBO-TV, did a fairly good job of covering People Power and the school board.

The principal of Pine Hills school No. 2 said he never listened to television news about school board actions.

The next question dealt with the content of radio news reports. None of the principals interviewed were able to comment on the coverage provided by WOKB, Tiger Radio. Because, as stated in chapter four of this study, WOKB does not employ a news staff and only reads wire releases, the station was dropped from the study, even though it is the only black oriented media source in Orange County. Wire service reports are read by the disk jockeys. There is no effort made to contact the source of any news release.

None of the principals were familiar with the coverage of station WLOF. The format of the station is loud hard rock music which is not always agreeable to more mature ears.

Mr. Howard would not comment on the individual

stations but said that radio coverage was fair. As far as he knew it was accurate.

Mr. Boston said that Mike Miller who did the talk show for station WDBO, did an excellent job. No other principal was familiar with WDBO coverage.

Four of seven principals commented on the effects of WKIS commentaries and news reports. Mr. Gene Burns, who gives the commentaries, was known to all four who mentioned WKIS.

Mr. Hooper said that Mr. Burns was most helpful. "During that time (February and March of 1972) he came out from WKIS. He saw the situation. He discussed it with my staff and also the staff at the county office. He told me he could see there was nothing to the reports of violence and racial disturbances and that there was nothing here that could be improved by reporting it on the air."

Mr. Boston of Richmond Heights said that Mr. Chastain, who hosted the talk show before Mr. Burns arrived, did not know what he was talking about. "Sometimes Mr. Burns knows what he is talking about, sometimes he doesn't. The man believes what he says. He gets things going then follows them to the end. He is the most intelligent person we have had as commentator locally."

Mr. Brooks of Ecclestone said, "Some people don't like Gene Burns - what he says or what he does. But what he says, he says to bring people back in line. He's not sensationalizing the situation."

The principal of Pine Hills school No. 1 said the only radio station he listened to was WKIS. "Gene Burns has his good and bad points. He is fair. At least he hits both sides."

Question No. 5 was, "Do the reporters who cover the school news understand enough of the problem to do an accurate and adequate job of reporting the situation?"

Four principals did not feel that the reporters were knowledgeable enough to report fairly, two principals refused to comment, and one was non-committal about the subject.

Mr. Howard of Carver would only say that, "The reporters know what to look for." This could be interpreted in several ways; Mr. Howard would not elaborate.

Mr. Talbert, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Boston and Mr. Brooks all agreed that the reports usually did not truly reflect the events.

Mr. Talbert said, "Some really know; many don't. They let their personal views spoil their perspective. Their prejudices show up in their articles."

Mr. Hooper said, "The reporters did not treat the subject fairly. The procedures for checking information were not followed. They evidently had insufficient background to enable proper checks."

Mr. Boston said, "What's said to us in a meeting and what appears in the paper are frequently two different things. Sometimes the reporters have no background knowledge. The

moderators of some of these talk shows didn't know what was going on. What was said would make you sick."

Mr. Brooks said, "A year or two ago all media were poor. They really didn't do anything to help the situation. It seemed they had biased personnel involved. In the last year or so there has been a little more maturity on the part of the media."

Neither of the Pine Hills principals would comment on the knowledge of the reporters because of lack of experience with the media members.

None of the principals made any effort to communicate with the media directly. They believed that to be the function of the county school administration. The media came to them for their contacts, not the other way around. Thus the answers to the question, "What efforts did you make to contact the media to present your position?" were all negative.

Question No. 7 was, "Did you make any other efforts to communicate with the community other than through the media?"

Six principals mentioned PTA meetings and bulletins to the parents. Mr. Brooks said that he belonged to the Chamber of Commerce Task Force on Education which had achieved good results. It had sponsored free bus rides for the members of the community to visit the schools involved in integration. Though few parents utilized the service, it was well covered by the media. Open houses at the schools

were mentioned by three principals. The consensus was that non-media communication was more effective for those reached, such as parents, but that non-media communication was very ineffective in informing the community at large.

When asked for their opinions about the treatment of the opposition by the media, Mr. Hooper and Mr. Howard stated that the opposition had more than its fair share of coverage. Neither Mr. Brooks nor Mr. Boston commented on the question. The two Pine Hills principals believed that the coverage had been fair for both sides, with the exception that the whole integration situation needed more explanation.

When asked if there was anything that hadn't been covered related to media coverage of school integration, Mr. Talbert said that there were too many stereotypes of racial characteristics operating for fair coverage. He also stated that there was too much fantasizing in the school reports. He felt that the only answer was another major newspaper to produce more than one slant on the issues. He gave no examples.

Mr. Brooks believes that the media are controlled by the owners, not by the community or special groups; therefore the content of the media will reflect the opinions of the owners, not the opinions of the reporters or the community. He also said, "Of course the opinion of the owners is influenced by what sells papers and earns money."

Mr. Boston again stressed how much better the

coverage in all the media is now than it was a few years ago. He felt that although there are still problems, the improvement is so great that the problems are minor.

Pine Hills principal No. 1 felt that the whole integration picture needed more explanation.

The other two principals had no further comment.

THE OPINIONS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION

The members of the school administration that I was able to interview were Mr. John Goonan, the director of pupil placement; Mr. James Higginbotham, the superintendent of schools for most of the period of the study; Mr. Cascaden, deputy superintendent; and Dr. Moffet, deputy superintendent. Dr. Nye, who replaced Mr. Higginbotham, was not available for interviews.

The members of the elected School Board who were available for interview were Mrs. Lee Kadel Davies, Mr. Roy Berryman, Mr. Stewart Shaffer, Mr. William Barnes, and Mr. Harley Tompkins. Mrs. Ethel Kennedy Lyons, Mr. William LaRue, Mrs. Lee Collison, Mr. Daniel Blackwelder and Mr. Raymond Bassett were unavailable for interviews. Mr. Blackwelder and Mrs. Kennedy felt that they had not been on the board long enough to comment on integration problems as board members. Their term only included six weeks of the period being studied. Mrs. Collison and Mr. Bassett said they were too busy and didn't have time for an interview.

The questions used for the interviews were the same

as those asked the principals in earlier interviews.

Mr. Higginbotham resigned in June of 1972 to accept a post as dean of Lake Highland Academy, an all-white private college preparatory school. The period preceeding his resignation was filled with conflict; there were accusations by board members Shaffer and Berryman of incompetence and lack of professional ethics. The board was split three to four over offering him a renewal of contract. When Mr. LaRue, then chairman of the board, was out of town on March 13, 1972, Mr. Higginbotham was asked to resign by Mr. Stewart Shaffer. The board split three to three. A special meeting was called in the Edgewater High auditorium so that large crowds could be present. The meeting was suggested by Mr. Gene Burns of radio station WKIS, who appeared as a witness in favor of Mr. Higginbotham. Mssrs. LaRue, Bassett, Tompkins, and Mrs. Davies voted to extend Mr. Higginbotham's contract. Mssrs. Shaffer, Berryman, and Mrs. Collison voted against extending it.

The first question was, "What is the basic cause of conflict in school integration?"

Mr. Higginbotham said, "The schools were basically impossible to integrate as neighborhood schools; they were all-black and all-white. The residents of both neighborhoods were prone to believe that they were discriminated against. CORE, NAACP, the Black Panther Party, the Council of Parents against Integration, the KKK and the white supremacist American Party were all involved. Our schools

were singled out by the NAACP attorneys for transported integration. The courts backed it because of the Singleton and the Swann decisions. Combine these and there is conflict."

Mr. Goonan stated that the main reason for conflict was that the court had been asked to decide on an integration plan by July or August, but did not handle it until October, thus integration had to begin after school had started.

The court records show a different story. The school board was notified on June 15, 1971, to be prepared for further integration. On July 22, 1971, the court ordered compliance with the Brown decision as amplified in the Swann decision. On July 28, Mr. Higginbotham sent a memorandum to the board stating that if further integration was necessary Judge Young would have to devise the plan. On August 25, Judge Young threatened the board and Mr. Higginbotham with contempt of court charges for non-compliance and gave them until September 8 to produce an acceptable plan. These facts would tend to discount Mr. Goonan's statement about responsibility.

Mr. Goonan also stated that a cause of conflict was the fear of pushing white girls into a social situation where interracial marriage became possible.

Mr. Casscadden and Dr. Moffet felt that personal values as expressed in families contributed to the conflict; fear of the unknown, distrust of blacks by whites and whites

by blacks, unwillingness to face the fact that there are outstanding differences in the schools. "Through the years black principals have felt that it was an unwritten rule that they should have funds left over at the end of the year to return to the school board. Also the blacks have not had the financial support from the PTA that the white schools have received."

Harley Tompkins stated that loss of personal freedom in education caused conflict. Stewart Shaffer blamed falling educational standards and educational disruption. Mr. Berryman emphasized that integration was not the issue, forced bussing was the issue and only cause of conflict. Mrs. Davies said that with such great change, conflict was inevitable.

When asked to comment on the newspaper coverage, Mr. Higginbotham, Mr. Tompkins, Mrs. Davies, Mr. Casscadden, Dr. Moffet, Mr. Barnes and Mr. Berryman said the Sentinel did an excellent job because it played down the controversy. Mr. Shaffer and Mr. Goonan felt that the Sentinel did a poor job because the news was slanted or too sensational. Mr. Goonan stated that all the papers were more apt to give, "A bad side to a bad deal, never presenting the good, only the bad. Parent problems were emphasized and discipline was blown sky high."

Mr. Shaffer rated the Sentinel at the bottom in responsibility. He said that, from his own personal experience, the paper printed the opposite of what actually

happened in the courts and the board meetings.

Mr. Barnes, Mr. Goonan, Mr. Casscadden, Dr. Moffet, Mr. Berryman, Mr. Tompkins and Mrs. Davies agreed that the Corner Cupboard was too sensational in its reporting. Mr. Shaffer believed it did a fair to a good job. Mr. Higginbotham does not consider the Corner Cupboard a newspaper.

Mr. Goonan, Mrs. Davies, Mr. Berryman, Mr. Higginbotham, and Mr. Tompkins were not familiar with the Sun of Pine Hills and could not comment on its performance. Mr. Casscadden and Dr. Moffet said the Sun was too sensational, inflammatory and shallow. They said, "It almost seems as though it is goading the two sides to continue to conflict. It did not allow the subject to drop. It gave only partial information, allowing the black community views to be completely unreported." Mr. Shaffer and Mr. Barnes said the Sun provided necessary information for the people of Pine Hills. Mr. Shaffer stated that the Sun did a "Creditable job under great difficulty. What they printed was both objective and analytical." Mr. Shaffer was a frequent source of information for the Sun.

Six of the administrators singled out Dorothy Madlee of the Sentinel staff as being an exceptionally well informed and capable reporter. She attended most of the school board meetings, even when not assigned to cover that particular meeting. She researched the background of her stories. Mr. Shaffer did not share their view and refused to talk to Mrs. Madlee when he had newsworthy information

to release.

None of the administrators was familiar with the news coverage of WOKB.

Mr. Casscadden commented that he didn't usually listen to WLOF, but, "At the approximate time of the integration difficulties one of the WLOF disc jockeys was inciting the children to misbehavior and breaches of discipline. This was very bad. It produced a crisis situation for us. He is no longer with them and they have since had a change in management. The situation has changed drastically, but for a while it was pretty bad." He did not elaborate further.

Mr. Berryman made the strongest statement regarding radio coverage when he said, "I won't listen to WKIS because of the radical left winger who I think is 'pink', editorializing on there. I think he tells half truths and casts inuendos until he thrives, and he has to thrive, on controversy. This is where he makes his living. He is unethical, in my opinion, and he's unfair in anything he says or does." Mr. Berryman was asked if he had tried to get equal time to answer Mr. Burns and he said, "No, I'm not interested in that type of thing. I wouldn't honor him by going down there to do that. It would just be compounding things that are untruthful to begin with. They edit your film. They won't let you say what you want to and what the truth is." Mr. Berryman did not listen to WLOF or WOKB, but thought that "WDBO tells it like it is if they

can get the truth."

Mrs. Davies praised both WKIS and WDBO for their coverage of the integration process. "'The Mike Miller Show', an evening show for audience participation, had me on the evening this order came out. He did a good job of steering the calls to the facts and away from the innuendos and rumors that kept cropping up." When asked who did the best job she said, "The staff of WKIS was as well informed as anyone."

Mr. Barnes was a new member of the school board. His term began about six weeks before the end of the period being studied. He observed that the radio and other media coverage was fairly good except for the fact that they didn't explain that the court decision was not new, it was a year old. "Judge Young had ruled that it was neither necessary nor desirable to integrate all the elementary schools at that time. The NAACP appealed that ruling, and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans overruled Judge Young. Therefore it was not a new ruling, just a delayed ruling from the year before." Mr. Barnes believed the coverage from all the electronic media was good.

Mrs. Davies, Mr. Higginbotham, Mr. Goonan, and Mr. Barnes felt that Mr. Gene Burns of WKIS did an excellent job. Mr. Tompkins felt that aside from his tendency to indulge in overkill, his news coverage and commentaries were good. Mr. Shaffer complained that Gene Burns did not use the information that Mr. Shaffer presented to him. Mr. Mike

Miller of WDBO was praised as the second best radio newsman.

Mr. Berryman observed that the television stations did a good job of reporting. "Oh they'll cut you once in a while, but most of the time they don't." He did not explain what he meant by "cut". He criticized a Channel 2 editorial that called for the resignation of the rest of the school board members after Mr. Higginbotham and Mr. Tompkins resigned and Mr. Casscadden and Dr. Moffet requested transfers. The editorial stated that the only way to clear the controversy at the school offices was to start fresh with all new board members.

Mrs. Davies criticized an announcement from Chris Schmidt of Channel 6 that purportedly named the schools involved in desegregation at a time when only Dr. Nye knew which schools would be named. The announcement later proved inaccurate.

Mrs. Davies observed that the best channel for news coverage varied with the particular personnel at the time. "Channel 6 used to be the best, now it's Channel 9." Both Mrs. Davies and Mr. Casscadden criticized Todd Persons of Channel 6 for only using the sensational part of a statement and for not respecting a confidential statement issued for later release. Chris Schmidt was also criticized for sensationalism.

Mr. Shaffer felt that Channel 9 gave the best coverage. He stated that Channels 2 and 6 didn't give

honest coverage. "When they should have been there, they were not there. If they got there they would sometimes do a fair job. They weren't there enough."

Mr. Tompkins believed that television coverage was better than the newspaper coverage in general because it did not create additional problems through sensationalism. He felt that their restraint prevented the situation from becoming worse.

Mr. Goonan stated that television coverage neither hurt nor helped but was basically factual.

Mr. Higginbotham first stated that Channels 6 and 9 did a good job. Then, referring to a June 1972 memo directing curriculum consultants to remove all controversial books about Black Power, black culture, sex education, and so forth, from the school library shelves; Mr. Higginbotham criticized Mr. Jim Alston of Channel 9. Later in the same interview, Mr. Higginbotham charged that of all the media, Channel 9 offended most flagrantly by not knowing the facts. He did not elaborate.

Most of the school administrators felt that efforts to contact the media were unnecessary as the members of the media contacted them about every day during the development of the integration plan. Mr. Higginbotham ordered special media presentations to be prepared to explain various desegregation moves. Mr. Shaffer prepared his own media presentations regarding the differences in test scores between black and white children. None of the media used his

presentation.

Non-media forms of communication were employed for the most part to reach small groups of disgruntled parents. Mr. Shaffer tried to reach people with his message, which the media would not accept, about the inferiority of the black schools. The results were better in one way. Personal problems and questions could be answered or adjusted individually. For disseminating general information, the media is the only effective way. Mr. Shaffer did not have much success with his non-media presentations because "I couldn't find enough groups to give the information to, to really do much good."

Chapter 8 of this study is a comparison of the minutes of the Orange County School Board meetings, the court records of Ellis vs. the Orange County School Board, and the content of the media coverage related to school board meetings and court hearings. In order to validate the statements in chapter 8 it was necessary to know whether the school board minutes as presented are complete. The administrators were asked for their opinion about the completeness of the school board minutes. Judgments about their completeness depend on two factors: first, the type of information sought and second, the purposes of those who were responsible for the content of the minutes. If the information sought is actual business conducted by the board, motions made and decisions reached, then the minutes are more than complete. If the information sought is the

discussion, argument, and complaints that occurred at the meetings, then the minutes are not complete.

Mr. Tompkins and Mrs. Davies considered the minutes to be too complete in that certain members tried to use them as a "congressional record" and read statements into the minutes that were not necessarily related to action of the board. A good example of this practice can be found in the minutes of August 28, 1971, when all board members read statements into the minutes concerning Judge Young's threat of contempt proceedings.⁶

Unforeseen problems in dealing with the media took two forms; problems with media personnel and problems with confidential information for later release. Problems with personnel were mainly concerned with the rotation of personnel from one assignment to another. Dorothy Madlee received more praise than any other print medium reporter, but she is no longer assigned to school board coverage. There have been approximately ten reporters whose bylines have appeared in school board news during the time of the study. The general complaint from the administrators was that as soon as the reporter assigned to cover school news got enough knowledge about the background of the news, and became well acquainted with the people involved, the reporter would be transferred to a new assignment.

⁶Orange County School Board Minutes, August 28, 1971.

Mr. Tompkins blamed the "government in the sunshine" law for many problems because there can be no confidential discussion on personnel, plans, etc. This is possibly the reason that the board members were not permitted to see the proposed integration plan during the formation stages. If the board was informed about possible plans, the media would have to be informed too, and that could cause community problems which are not necessary.

The problem of confidentiality could also explain the complaints of Mrs. Davies about premature information. It could be possible that the news media were briefed on the developing integration plans and asked to keep the information confidential until a later date, when the plans were finalized. This would be supported by Dr. Moffet's and Mr. Casscadden's complaint that Todd Persons of Channel 6 did not respect a confidence.

Both Mr. Casscadden and Dr. Moffet praised Emily Bavar, a Sentinel editorial writer, for her practice of seeking background information before making statements about the schools. They praised the Sentinel for the public service rendered by printing bus routes and school schedules. They also felt that the Sentinel did an excellent job of reporting the good programs such as the career clubs at Phyllis Wheatley School.

SUMMARY

Of the principals interviewed, three felt that the Sentinel and the Star (everyone considered them the same

paper) gave very good coverage to the school integration crisis; three felt that it gave only fair coverage, and one did not read the school news reports.

Four principals felt that the Corner Cupboard printed too much sensational inflammatory news, and three principals were not familiar with the contents of the paper.

Two principals felt that the Sun of Pine Hills did a good job, three thought it was too inflammatory and two were not familiar with the paper. On television coverage, two believed Channel 6 did a very good job, two a fair job, and two a poor job of covering school news.

None of the principals believed that Channel 2 did a good job, probably because it is more oriented to Volusia County. Two felt it did a fair job, three a poor job and two were not familiar with their coverage.

Three principals felt that Channel 9 did the best job of all the television stations, one thought they did a fair job and two were not familiar with the news coverage of Channel 9.

None of the principals were familiar enough with the news coverage of either WOKB or WLOP to comment on the quality of their news.

One principal believed WDBO did a very good job, five a fair job, and one was not familiar with the station.

Five principals stated that WKIS did a very good or excellent job, in covering school news, one a fair job and one was not familiar with the station.

Of the school board members and administrators who were interviewed, seven thought the Sentinel-Star did a good job of reporting, emphasizing the restraint used in reporting conflict. Two believed that the paper did a poor job because they did not report everything.

On the coverage by the Sun of Pine Hills, two thought the Sun did a good job, two thought the coverage was very poor, and five were not familiar with the Sun.

One school administrator judged the coverage of the Corner Cupboard to be fair, and eight thought it was poor because of sensationalism.

The television channel that most of the administrators preferred for coverage of school news was Channel 9. Four believed its coverage to be very good, four thought it was fair and one thought it was poor.

Two administrators judged Channel 6 coverage to be very good, four thought it was fair and three believed Channel 6 coverage to be poor.

Six administrators judged Channel 2 coverage of school news to be fair, three felt it was poor. The reason most frequently given was that Channel 2 divides its staff and resources between Volusia, Seminole and Orange Counties. This would dilute its coverage of Orange County news.

None of the administrators was familiar with station WOKB radio.

Three administrators believed that WLOF coverage

was fair, two thought it was poor, and four were not familiar with the coverage of WKIS. Six believed it to be very good, two fair and one thought it was poor.

All of the administrators interviewed were familiar with WDBO coverage. Five considered it good, four considered it fair, no one thought it was poor.

Chapter 6

COMMUNITY LEADERS VIEW THE WORK OF THE MEDIA

The leaders of community organizations who were available for contact were the NAACP, CORE, the Orange County Council of the PTA, and People Power. The leaders of the now defunct Parent's Council Against Bussing are either involved with People Power, have unlisted phones and are unavailable for contact, or have left town.

NAACP

The members of the NAACP who were available for interviews were Mr. Michael Hardy, the president of the Central Florida NAACP, Mr. Norris Woolfork III, the attorney for the NAACP, and Mrs. Katy Wright, teacher and member of the Mayor's Council for Human Relations in Orlando.

The questions were the same that were used with the representatives of the Orange County Schools. The first question was what has caused the conflict in the integration of the Orange County Schools.

Mr. Woolfork cited the unwillingness of the white community to accept the decisions of the courts. Mr. Hardy spoke very bluntly, quoting from the NAACP newsletter, "It ain't the busses, it's the Niggers." In other words, racism.

Mrs. Wright spoke of "tunnelvision", the inability of the members of the white community to see values in any culture but their own.

None of the NAACP representatives were familiar enough with the coverage of the Sun of Pine Hills to allow them to comment on the content of that paper.

Both Mr. Hardy and Mrs. Wright felt that the Corner Cupboard, though it occasionally used sensationalism, was basically both accurate and fair in the coverage of inter-racial problems. They both stated that the Corner Cupboard many times reported incidents in the black community that were ignored in the Sentinel. Mrs. Wright felt that the Corner Cupboard was both accurate and fair; Mr. Hardy said that if you really wanted to know what was going on in this community, you should read the Corner Cupboard.

Mr. Woolfork stated that he did not read the Corner Cupboard very often, but felt that what he had seen tended toward the sensational.

All three felt that the Sentinel and the Star were essentially one paper. Mrs. Wright commented on the fact that often the headlines of an article were not in agreement with the content of the body of the article. She felt that the Sentinel tended to blame the NAACP for bringing the integration suits and it charged that the NAACP was not concerned about the interests of the children involved. She also said, "It's not only what they print, but what they don't print that does the damage. It is just as damaging to ignore an

important story concerning the black community as it is to print an unfair story." She did say that although the editorial page was still a "mullet wrapper", the rest of the coverage had improved in the last five years.

81 Mr. Hardy said that all the papers show lack of understanding about how the NAACP operates. He felt that they were not interested in the black perspective, but were only interested in the white perspective. He said, "The Sentinel raises hopes (of the ability to avoid integration) that don't exist, raises questions that are beside the point, and feeds the desire to be reassured that everything will remain the same. They want all to believe that everything is OK. They should shut their mouths. The Sentinel has a white protective attitude. A paper should serve the whole community. They failed to seek out the black or minority side - their editorial page is fit only to wrap garbage."

Mr. Woolfork commented, "In keeping with its image of conservatism, the paper has reported in an anti-integration vein to satisfy the majority. The paper has the feel of the pulse of the white community." Implying that words are chosen with bias he said, "For instance, they use the word 'mix'. This conjures up an image of food, something nasty or vulgar. They won't use the words integration or desegregation. Four or five years ago they had a reporter who knew what was going on in the courts; he understood the legal terminology. I don't remember his name. It used to

be they would assign one reporter to the courts. In these later years they have been more sensational; they won't play it down. If it isn't deliberately distorted, at least it hasn't been as accurate as it could be."

"There has been no background given on the Supreme Court decisions. Their analysis of Swann was erroneous. They took statements completely out of context. A paper has an obligation to be fair and objective; they don't understand that you have to talk to other sources."

On television coverage, Mrs. Wright said, "Channel 6, WDBO-TV, comes out of the same can as the Sentinel." She felt that Channel 9, WFTV, was more favorable, and that Channel 2, WESH-TV, was more concerned with Volusia County.

Mr. Hardy thought that Channel 9 did a fair job because of the work of the black reporters who knew what to look for.

Mr. Woolfork said that television was fairly complete. He felt that there was a severe lack of depth in both television and newspaper coverage. For instance, the words "racial balance" were not in any decision, but the news media always speak of the NAACP seeking a racial balance in the schools. Mr. Woolfork said they are not seeking a racial balance. Mr. Hardy made the same point and said that the integration of the races in the schools is the only way to be certain that all children get the same quality of education. The proof that they were not is borne out by the fact that \$12,000 had to be spent at Carver before

white children were allowed to attend school there.

On the subject of radio coverage, Mrs. Wright praised WKIS because she was impressed with Gene Burns' commentaries. Until Mr. Burns' arrival she felt that this was a one idea community. Mr. Burns brings in many dimensions. She felt that WOKB was too shallow in its coverage of the news; there was not enough depth, not enough information.

Mr. Hardy said that WOKB was owned and controlled by whites so he really didn't think much of it. In fact he said it has done the worse job of all. He described the news department as a "rip and read" service where they make such mistakes as to call "soccer" "saucer"; mispronunciations which are atrocious. The only way they serve the black community is by reading the wire service announcements, the funeral notices and what band is playing where. The only part of this that really serves any purpose is the music. He also stated that WLOF does not cover the news as it should. He felt that it did not give enough information to the age group which they serve even though this is the age group which is involved in the integration orders.

Mr. Woolfork also praised WKIS, especially Richard King. He said that it was fair and knowledgeable, though it sometimes played to the audience. He said that he didn't expect too much out of WOKB because it was owned by a white person.

Mrs. Wright did not comment on the knowledge of the reporters.

Mr. Hardy felt that the reporters went looking for members of the black community who agreed with the white point of view on the issue of segregation. When they found that CORE agreed, they gave it all the coverage. They made it look as though no blacks wanted integration. He said, "The truth is that CORE has very little backing financially and does not have a large membership. The media created CORE's importance; CORE actually represents a very small portion of the black community.

Mr. Woolfork said that he doesn't even talk to reporters anymore. In the past what he has said has been slanted, ridiculed or not reported at all, so he doesn't even return their calls.

In regard to non-media means of communication, Mrs. Wright mentioned the Orlando Human Relations Committee, of which she is a member. They attempt to explain feelings and problems so that racial conflict could be avoided.

Mr. Hardy mentioned a medium which is so new it can't yet be called mass medium, The Weekly Observer, a black oriented, black-owned and published newspaper from Eatonville.

Mr. Woolfork said that non-media types of communication such as meetings, forums, etc., were too emotional in a situation such as integration. He felt that people were so emotional about it that they couldn't listen to reason. Because of this he feels that such efforts are a waste of time and he can't talk to them.

Mrs. Wright expressed some concerns about black visibility in the media. She stated that in the Brown decision the court said that separate cannot be equal. "If decisions are made and I am not visible, then they won't consider my needs. More coverage of black culture is needed. Of course People Power needs to be heard, but good things for us need to be heard too."

Mr. Woolfork charged that the media have been fanning the fires of rebellion in the integration situation. He said, "If they can't report fairly, then they shouldn't report at all." He "tunes the paper (Sentinel) out". Knowledgeable blacks consider it a mullet wrapper. Within the last five years, while still under Martin Anderson's influence, they were still referring to Negro women as Negresses. Things have improved some since his retirement.

CORE

Mr. James Reed, Assistant Mayor of Eatonville, was the only spokesman for CORE whom I was able to reach. The Reverend George Wilson has had his phone disconnected, and the Reverend Jack Mitchell has had his phone changed to an unlisted number.

Mr. Reed felt that the basic cause of conflict was bussing. He said that it didn't make a black child one bit smarter to sit next to a white child in school. He carefully described the difference between proximity, which was all that school integration could achieve, and unity.

which could only be brought about by real friendship and concern. School integration could not achieve unity. CORE has a bill pending in the Legislature to allow each neighborhood to control its own schools rather than having all the schools controlled from one county office as prescribed in the Florida state constitution at this time.

Mr. Reed was not familiar with the Sun of Pine Hills nor the Corner Cupboard. He stated that what the Orlando Sentinel did not ignore, it treated superficially. He felt that the most pressing need in Central Florida was for a good black oriented newspaper, radio station and eventually a television station.

He mentioned WOKB and WTLN, supposedly black oriented but white owned. He said they had no news staff. They were only money makers for their white owners and had no responsibility to the black community.

WKIS and WDBO gave CORE ample time and support. At the time of the interview Mr. Reed was working with the manager and the owner of Channel 6 on the feasibility of producing a program on CORE.

In conjunction with unforeseen problems with the media, he mentioned that the CORE side of the issue has not been presented in the black magazines. He stated that the NAACP was an "ego stronghold" for black professional people and that they needed to come over to CORE.

PEOPLE POWER

Mr. Thomas Heckle is the public relations chairman for People Power, the organization formed in West Orange County to oppose integration of the elementary schools. Barbara Polsley is the Chairman of that organization.

When asked what the basic cause of conflict in school integration is, Mr. Heckle said that it is the stripping away of constitutional rights. The attempt to legislate morality and equality just won't work.

Mrs. Polsley said that she felt the problem was not with integration per se, but with the manner in which pupils were being assigned and transported away from the neighborhood schools.

When asked to comment on the coverage by the Sentinel and the Star, both Mr. Heckle and Mrs. Polsley said they thought the coverages were the same.

Mr. Heckle said that in his opinion the Sentinel and the Star "go along with whatever is politically expedient. The powers that be dictate their policies. The Sentinel West (a local supplement to the Sunday and Thursday Sentinel) gives us the only decent coverage."

Mrs. Polsley saw the Sentinel and the Star as shallow. "They only report what happens - they saw nothing about actual or possible effects." She felt that they gave People Power fair coverage, although at times they were made to look radically racist. She also said that they

played up the Reverend John Butler Book too much, since he was never really a member of People Power. (Mr. Book is the pastor of the North Side Church of Christ who was emotionally acclaimed chairman of People Power on a temporary basis.) She said that when the Reverend Book came into the People Power meeting and started talking about God and Country, she was sure the Messiah had come. She didn't realize how radical and emotional people could become. She felt that the Sentinel never investigated to find out what the founders of People Power really were attempting to do.

Mr. Heckle felt that the Corner Cupboard had excellent objective coverage. "When we were right or when we were wrong, they covered it the best both ways." Mrs. Polsley thought the Corner Cupboard went into more depth in its reporting than the Sentinel.

Both Mr. Heckle and Mrs. Polsley felt that the Sun of Pine Hills did a good job, though Mr. Heckle spoke of a change in attitude from very favorable to rather negative over the time the organization was active.

Mr. Heckle described his problems with the newspapers, especially with the Sentinel. "I could never get anything printed the way it was said. I was misquoted. Sections were left out to change the meanings. For instance, dropping the 'not' in 'not racist' so that my statement read 'we are a racist organization.' I would take the copy in, go over it, underline it for emphasis,

and even then it would be changed. Usually, but not always, the Sun and the Corner Cupboard would print it word for word." When asked about television coverage, Mr. Heckle said that only Channel 6 gave them full coverage, but even it wasn't there when the big story broke about Barbara Polesley's trip to Washington to ask Congress for help in the fight against bussing. Channel 9, WFTV, did the next best job, and Channel 2, WESH-TV, wasn't even there.

He explained some of the reluctance of the media to cover the actions of People Power by admitting that they had tried to manufacture news. He said, "The members of People Power tried to keep their names in the media by calling them for every little thing. Everything changed when the Reverend Book came to the first big meeting. The media gave him all the headlines and his ghost still haunts us. Half the membership walked out when he came in and they haven't been back."

Mrs. Polesley believed that television gave them fair coverage with Channel 9, WDBO-TV, doing the best job and Channel 2, WESH-TV, the poorest.

On the subject of radio coverage, WKIS was rated the best by both Mr. Heckle and Mrs. Polesley. Mrs. Polesley said that Gene Burns intends to be a controversial issue himself. "What he says is only his opinion. He does his job and is entitled to his opinion." Since Mr. Burns has opposed the People Power organization on his program, Mrs. Polesley was asked if she ever sought rebuttal time from WKIS.

She said that the worse things he had said were to call them radical racists and she didn't feel that was strong enough to warrant a rebuttal.

Mr. Heckle said that Gene Burns did more for People Power than any other person. "He's objective and has changed his views some. He keeps an open mind. Of all the reporters he is the most knowledgeable and objective."

Both Mrs. Polsley and Mr. Heckle rated WDBO as second best and WLOF as third. Neither knew anything about WOKB.

The specific efforts that People Power made to communicate with the media were with handouts, press conferences, announcements of meetings and efforts, and even name dropping, such as "We are meeting today with Mr. X, prominent attorney, to map out the next step in our legal battles."

Non-media efforts at communicating with the public, were such actions as always being represented at the school board meetings, petitions at the shopping centers and our collection efforts at the intersections of main roads in Pine Hills.

Mrs. Polsley considered the NAACP to be the main opponents of People Power and felt that "since they are a minority of a minority the courts should not listen to them." She felt they had more than adequate media coverage.

Mr. Heckle said that it was a measure of their lack of success that they have not received any opposition. They

have not been successful and he does not know why.

PTA

The representatives of the PTA who were interviewed were Mrs. Barbara Owens, President of the Orange County Council of PTA's, Mrs. Mary Lou Griffin, area representative, and Mr. Roosevelt Rivers, President of Eccleston PTA.

When asked what was the basic cause of conflict in the school integration process, Mrs. Owens said, "People feel that the schools belong to them and when they are told that they can't send their children to the schools of their choice they get angry." She also mentioned a lack of knowledge or fear of the unknown in relation to the schools that their children will be transferred to. Mrs. Griffin felt that a loss of freedom of choice caused the anger. Mr. Rivers said that lack of knowledge about the way of life in different neighborhoods was the main cause of conflict.

Mrs. Owens felt that Dorothy Madlee of the Sentinel did the best job of any reporter but, although the Sentinel reported the basic facts, they didn't give enough background information and the lack of depth produced fear and then controversy. "All the media played up CORE, but I was never able to identify more than twelve members of CORE through the whole thing." Mr. Rivers felt that the Sentinel and the Star were "real fair" in their coverage. He spoke of Dorothy Madlee as being especially good.

None of the PTA representatives were familiar with the Sun of Pine Hills.

On the subject of the Corner Cupboard, Mrs. Owens believed that the main source of fear in the integration process is the way the Cupboard reported the incidents. "They have always blown things out of all proportion. They are radical, sensational, and they exaggerate." Mrs. Griffin agreed, citing the reports of "riots" at Robinswood that only involved three or four children. (From Mr. Hooper's description of the "riot", even Mrs. Griffin was misinformed).

Mr. Rivers said that he had not read the Corner Cupboard for some time, and had mixed emotions about what they had printed in the past. He stated that Orlando was one of the better places in the nation for blacks because of people like Mr. Brooks, the principal of Eccleston, and Mr. Perkins, the attorney who stayed in touch with the youth. He felt that a paper such as the Corner Cupboard did nothing to contribute to this image and it does not represent the community.

Mrs. Owens was distressed by several television specials on the subject of bussing because they gave the impression that everything was going well when it wasn't. She didn't remember the channel or the date, just the subject. She said that the television reported the integration was going smoothly in Hillsborough, Dade and Duval counties, when she knew through PTA contacts that it wasn't.

She believes that burying the problem doesn't help.

Mr. Rivers did not comment on the individual channel television coverage, but felt that it was typical of Central Florida news in general. He mentioned one occasion on which he was interviewed when he said that it was unfair for the teachers to be integrated but not the children, too. He said he was misquoted. They implied that he was against integration altogether, but he wasn't. He felt that the community should get moving toward a truly unitary school system. He mentioned the Orlando Chamber of Commerce Task Force on Education and said that they had good sense in their approach to things. He did not elaborate on what that approach was.

When asked about radio, Mrs. Owens became specific. She said first that she would not comment on WKIS because she was a good friend of Mr. Burns and she wouldn't want her answers to be prejudiced in his favor. She did say that Pat Flynn, an announcer for WKIS, was at every school board meeting and that tapes were made of the whole thing, which is more than most stations did.

She said that WLOF was guilty many times of exaggeration. She specifically mentioned one instance when WLOF was reporting a riot at Oakridge High School and describing the police arrival. She happened to be driving by Oakridge at that time and everything was peaceful. It was all a lie. She continued, "We've had problems, sure, but because of all the inaccurate reports, no one is saying anything and that is

just as bad."

Mr. Rivers took the opposite stand. He felt that WLOF did a superior job.

Mrs. Owens and Mr. Rivers disagreed also on whether the reporters understood the situation well enough to do a good job. Mrs. Owens said that she didn't think so because they weren't there consistently. Mrs. Owens attended all the Court hearings and all the School Board meetings and the only reporter who attended consistently was Pat Flynn of WKIS. Although Dorothy Madlee did an excellent job while she was assigned to school coverage, she wasn't allowed to stay long enough for real follow-through. Mr. Rivers said he thought the reporters knew the subject.

Mrs. Owens has had little success in contacting the media for PTA. "To give them news about good happenings is fruitless. All my special efforts are ignored. I advised them of two Orange County students who won a national art award; it was ignored. I phoned from the national PTA convention in St. Louis to tell them that the National PTA had gone on record against bussing for integration; that was ignored until I got back and contacted Ormond Powers personally. Then he wrote an article containing more information about me than about the convention, which was the important thing."

Mr. Rivers said that he has no problems in contacting the media. All he had to do was pick up the phone and call and they gave him cooperation. He believed the cooperation

he received was because of his position as President of the Florida A. and M. Alumni Association and his membership in the Chamber of Commerce.

Mrs. Owens agreed with Mr. Tompkins that the School Board minutes are sometimes too complete.

Both Mrs. Owens and Mr. Rivers feel that non-media types of communication such as PTA meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings, open houses at the schools, etc., are at least as effective as the media.

Mrs. Owens felt that the NAACP side of the integration fight had not been well presented.

When asked about unforeseen problems in dealing with the media, Mrs. Owens said, "The media have not prepared the people for what is coming. There will be racial ratios in all classes, the ACLU has filed suits to prevent all prayers and Bibles in the schools. They should tell it like it is. The parents don't know the harrasment the teachers and principals have been taking in this county."

"I can understand why they can't publish everything they get, but they should publish good news with the bad. They should recognize outstanding achievement. Instead, they print the bad assumptions without even checking them out."

"I was shocked at the last court order. There was not enough indignation over it in the media; nor did they print enough information on it."

Considering the fact that there at times seems to be large areas of difference between the races on what they want from the media, the figures from the answers of community leaders have been divided by race for comparison. It seems that they agree most of the time on who is doing a good job of news coverage. One leader of the black community thought the Sentinel and Star were doing a good job; no leaders of the white organizations thought they were doing well. One member of the white leadership thought they did a fair job, three leaders of black organizations thought they were doing a poor job, and three members of the white organizations thought they were doing a poor job. This makes one good, one fair, and five poor votes for the Sentinel. Neither group felt that enough was printed about either side in the controversy.

Two black and two white leaders considered the Corner Cupboard coverage to be good. One black leader considered the coverage fair, and one black and two white leaders considered it poor for the reason that it was too sensational or inflammatory to do any good.

None of the black leaders were familiar with the Sun, and two of the white leaders were not familiar with it. The two who were familiar with it felt that the coverage was good.

There is very little disagreement on what is good.

In the comments on the television coverage, two of the black leaders either would not or could not differentiate

between the coverage of the various channels, and two of the white leaders did not differentiate either. Mr. Woolfork stated that one channel does a very good job and one a very bad job and one was just so-so. When asked to identify them, he declined stating that anyone who watched could tell which ones he meant.

Channel 6 got one fair and one poor vote from the black leaders, and two good votes from the white leaders.

Channel 2 got one fair and one poor from the black leaders and two poor votes from the white leaders.

Channel 9 got two fair votes from the black leaders, and two fair votes from the white leaders.

On the subject of radio coverage the agreement was even greater. Six leaders, three white and three black, considered WKIS coverage to be good. One black and one white considered it fair.

WDBO received one good vote from a black leader, two fair votes from black leaders and two from white leaders, one not familiar from a black leader, two from white leaders.

Chapter 7

EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES

An editorial is defined as the official expression of opinion on some issue.¹ A commentary is defined as a body of illustrative or explanatory notes; an exposition.² There have been both editorials and commentaries in the media related to the integration of Orange County schools. There were four editorials in the Sentinel, none in the Star, six in the Corner Cupboard and twelve in the Sun of Pine Hills. Channel 2 took an editorial stand during the conflict between the school board and Mr. Higginbotham on May 8, and WKIS has had many commentaries by Mr. Gene Burns regarding the integration problems in Orange County. The Sentinel published two commentaries called "Insight" during the same time period.

THE PRESS

The Sentinel newspaper took an editorial stand on

¹Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary, Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, N. Y.: 1971. p. 420.

²Ibid., p. 271.

June 17, 1971, and its editorial was titled "Progress in Integration."³ It was a description of the progress made toward a unitary school system and a warning that people will not take kindly to bussing. It was essentially a defense of the status quo and opposed NAACP requests for further relief from segregation.

On August 28, 1971, the Sentinel's editorial stand was in favor of Judge Young, who at that time had threatened the school board with contempt if it did not produce a plan for further action toward desegregation. It was titled, "Board's Defiance of U. S. Court Can Only Hurt the School System." It appealed for compliance by the board with Judge Young's order for integration. It stated that the board was wrong, the defiance was an act of folly serving no good, and the board members had been poorly advised by a personally ambitious James Higginbotham.⁴

On November 21, 1972, the editorial was titled, "Only Solution to More Bussing is Action by the Next Congress." It stated that the school board had no alternative but to comply with the court order involving thirty schools and 3,887 youngsters. It made a plea for a constitutional amendment as the only solution. A second editorial the same day was titled "Not Judge Young." It stated that Judge

³Editorial, The Orlando Sentinel, June 17, 1971, p. 14A.

⁴Ibid., August 20, 1971, p. 14A.

Young had accepted the racial balance in Orange County schools, but the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals had overruled his decision.⁵

On November 30, 1971, the Sentinel editorial page contained the following headline, "Bussing Remedy Is In The Court Makeup and Time Is On The Side of Sanity." This editorial stated that Nixon was balancing the Supreme Court, and when he was through we could get the bussing orders changed. Until that time we have no alternative.⁶

The commentaries were carried in the special Sunday feature called Insight. The first one, May 5, 1971, was a statistical analysis of the students who were already being transported in Orange County. At that time, 38% of 90,000 pupils were riding busses to school. It was a full-page article detailing the various reasons for transportation.⁷

On November 26, 1972, the Insight page carried the following headline, "Study Finds School Not the Place to Correct Inequality." It was a three-fourth page analysis of an article from the Saturday Review of Education by Mary Jo Bame. The findings of the study were that schools have very little impact on a child's development. Children are more influenced by the home, by outside activities, by what

⁵Ibid., November 21, 1972, p. 12A.

⁶Ibid., November 30, 1972, p. 16A.

⁷Ibid., May 5, 1972, p. 18A.

they see on television than they are by the schools. The evidence this study presents suggests that equalizing opportunity in the schools has little or no effect on equalization of opportunity for life.⁸

On June 28, 1971, the Corner Cupboard editorial was titled, "A Bold Statement." It praised the stand taken by CORE against bussing. It stated further that bussing is a waste of money which should be used to bring all schools to a higher educational level.⁹

On September 2, 1971, the editorial was titled, "Bussing is Temporary - Askew." It quoted Governor Askew as stating that bussing is a temporary means of ending racial discrimination.¹⁰

October 7, the editor complained about "Lost Schooling." His argument was that the time spent on busses would be more effective if it were spent in the schools. The taxpayers were getting disturbed and wouldn't stand for much more forced bussing.¹¹

November 23, 1972, the question "Why Go To School?" headed the editorial. It questioned the value of compulsory attendance at school and advocated repealing the compulsory

⁸Ibid., November 26, 1972, 1C.

⁹Editorial, The Corner Cupboard, (Orlando) June 28, 1971, p. 6.

¹⁰Ibid., September 2, 1971, p. 7.

¹¹Ibid., October 7, 1971, p. 7.

attendance law.¹²

The November 27th editorial seemed to take a different view. It asked, "Is It Worth It?" and questioned the value of the school boycott which would lose so much money from state funds because of funding by attendance instead of membership.¹³

The Sun of Pine Hills is almost a solo operation. The editor, Mr. Ryder, does most of his own reporting as well as editing. Many times articles and editorials are combined on the front page of the paper.

On September 2, 1971, shortly after the Board and Mr. Higginbotham decided that Judge Young should produce his own desegregation plan the Sun said, "Our Best Wishes for the School Board." It wished them courage, determination and public support during this right turn of history in the fight for neighborhood schools. He knew that the Board was jeopardizing itself through its stand. Its acts were appreciated.¹⁴

The editorial of September 9, 1971, said, "School Plan Looks Good For Us." It quoted the Board and Mr. Higginbotham as stating that they expected to submit a plan that would not require crosstown bussing for either the

¹²Ibid., November 23, 1972, p. 6.

¹³Ibid., November 27, 1972, p. 7.

¹⁴Editorial, The Sun of Pine Hills, September 2, 1971, p. 4.

Pine Hills or the Orla Vista areas.¹⁵

On October 14, 1971, the editorial was a plea for support of the Council of Parents Against Bussing. It said, "No Time For Indifference." We had a bad situation and there were economic factors involved. The Council of Parents was having a "tough time" and needed support. His readers were told to realize that this was the beginning of the fight against bussing, not the end.¹⁶

Judge Young had ordered a cultural exchange between the remaining all-black schools and the white schools to enable the children to learn to work together. The events included were art shows, musical events, sports events, etc. The Sun editorial of November 11, 1971, "On Cultural Exchange" condemned the practice as "social manipulation."¹⁷

On May 11, 1972, Mr. Ryder took issue with Mr. Higginbotham's study concerning the quality of education at Robinswood and Carver Junior High Schools. Titled "Off and Running Again," it questioned the switch in Mr. Higginbotham's opinion about Carver. The week prior to May 11 he was proposing closing Carver; then on May 11 he said it was as good or better than other junior high schools in

¹⁵Ibid., September 9, 1971, p. 1.

¹⁶Ibid., October 14, 1971, p. 4.

¹⁷Ibid., November 1, 1971, p. 4.

Orange County. Mr. Ryder doubted his accuracy.¹⁸

On May 18, 1972, Mr. Ryder commented on an article from the Sentinel which stated that Orange County Schools could lose their accreditation because of the meddling of School Board members in the administration of the schools. "Disaccreditation is a Bugaboo," said Mr. Ryder. Meddling by the press in School Board business was a greater danger, in his opinion.¹⁹

June 1, 1972, Mr. Ryder wrote, "Sensitivity Training In Our Midst - A Communist Plot." He stated that sensitivity training had been used in Korea, and the description of it was unbelievable. He then charged that sensitivity training was being used in the self-concept study in Orange County Schools for Negro students. He said that we don't want a psychological takeover by the Communists.²⁰

September 7, 1972, brought an editorial titled, "Parents Win An Empty Victory." The suit filed by the Council of Parents on October 19, 1971, had been decided in favor of the Council; however, the editorial quoted Dr. Nye as stating that although state money cannot be used to transport students who live within two miles of an appropriate school, it means nothing because the Federal Courts define an appropriate school. The Council of Parents may

¹⁸Ibid., May 11, 1972, p. 4.

¹⁹Ibid., May 18, 1972, p. 4.

²⁰Ibid., June 1, 1972, p. 4.

have won in court, but they didn't win anything.²¹

In a change of outlook, the September 14, 1972, editorial was headed, "A Smooth Opening." It stated that because not a whisper of complaint had been received from any parents, he presumed that things were going well at both Carver and Robinswood.²²

The October 23, 1972, editorial praised Dr. Nye. "Strong Man On The Job," described Dr. Nye as a man of courage who met the bussing issue head on at Mollie Ray PTA. Nye also shut the door in the face of newsmen seeking information on integration planning.²³

On November 23, 1972, the editorial was "A Double Dose for Us" which bemoans both the community correctional center near Sunland Hospital and the integration of all Pine Hills area elementary schools. It then concluded that "Pine Hills gets the bad end of deals."²⁴

The December 14 editorial page was headed, "This week letter writers have pushed our editorials right off the page." The first letter was headed "Bussing plan irrational, unfair." The second letter was "Equal schools, not bussing is the answer." The third letter was on the lack of transportation for mentally handicapped because of

²¹Ibid., September 7, 1972, p. 2

²²Ibid., September 14, 1972, p. 4.

²³Ibid., October 23, 1972, p. 1.

²⁴Ibid., November 23, 1971, p. 4.

a shortage of busses.²⁵

December 21 Mr. Ryder wrote about "People Power Appeals For Public Support." It was a request from Tom Heckle for quality education close to home.²⁶

RADIO COMMENTARIES

WDBO, WLOF, and WOKB do not have a policy of editorializing or commenting on the news. WKIS, however, has a commentary daily by Mr. Gene Burns. Since January, 1972, when Mr. Burns attended his first school board meeting, to the present time, Mr. Burns has been deeply interested in the courses taken by the Orange County School Board. His often caustic commentaries began with one titled, "I Would Like to Report that Education is Alive and Well in Orange County - It Isn't..."²⁷ Two of his January commentaries were concerned with the problems of the Orange County School Board, especially the problems of integration and the board conflicts that arose because of integration. Though the first commentary on the School Board was not related to integration problems, it marks the beginning, January 25, 1972, of Mr. Burns' involvement with the school system.

²⁵Ibid., December 14, 1972, p. 3.

²⁶Ibid., December 21, 1972, p. 4.

²⁷Gene Burns, Commentary, Radio Station WKIS, January 25, 1972.

On January 31,²⁸ the commentary was devoted to the human relations workshop at Carver which Mr. Shaffer had labeled "Sensitivity Training." He returned to the same subject February 1.²⁹

On March 15, 1972, Mr. Burns requested a special weekend meeting of the School Board to publicly air the controversy over integration and other administrative actions concerned with the integration process that had led Mr. Shaffer to call for the resignation of Mr. Higginbotham on March 13, 1972.³⁰

The charges raised against Mr. Higginbotham by Mr. Shaffer were that he:

1. Was responsible for Carver Junior High being a substandard school.
2. Denied and delayed information requested by Mr. Shaffer.
3. Failed to remove supplemental materials such as Black history and Black Power literature which promote class hatred.
4. Allowed the teaching of sensitivity training at Carver.

Mr. Shaffer had also requested the resignation of James Markle, School Board attorney, at the same time. The motion

²⁸Ibid., January 31, 1972.

²⁹Ibid., March 15, 1972.

³⁰Ibid., March 13, 1972.

had been tabled and had not been acted on either way.³¹

The meeting requested by Mr. Burns took place March 21, 1972, in the Edgewater High auditorium. Mr. Burns spoke in favor of Mr. Higginbotham and used his speech as his commentary subject for that day.³²

On the 22nd of March he reported that the meeting had been a success. James Higginbotham had been reappointed.³³

On May 4, 1972, he spoke of a suit filed by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ryan charging that violence, profanity, obscenity, intimidation, extortion, sexual molestation, classroom disruption, theft, and possession of weapons ran rampant throughout Carver and Robinswood Junior High Schools. Mr. Burns noted that there has been no proof to substantiate these charges. He closed his commentary with the wish that the case would be dismissed because, "For mindless bigotry there is no other remedy at law."³⁴

The next three commentaries on the school board dealt with the conflict within the board over the effects on integration and the final resignation of both Mr. Higgin-

³¹Orange County School Board Minutes, March 13, 1972.

³²Gene Burns, Commentary, Radio Station WKIS, March 21, 1972.

³³Ibid., March 22, 1972.

³⁴Ibid., May 4, 1972.

botham and Mr. Tompkins, the School Board Chairman.³⁵

May 24, 1972, the commentary was about the appointment of additional personnel to Robinswood Junior High though there was no proof that there was any need for them because of lack of racial problems.³⁶

May 30 was congratulations for James Higginbotham's good job in guiding the Orange County Schools through the difficult job of integration without major difficulties.³⁷

The July 18, 1972, commentary was titled "The Dangerous Road to Fahrenheit 451." It concerned a memo from Dr. Moffet to all schools and curriculum research assistants. It read, "Look especially for books which deal with controversial subjects such as human reproduction, social change, black power, black history and other areas which might cause concern in your community. As you discover materials on these purchase lists, please go to the library and remove them from the shelves and take them to your office..." It strongly protested such actions.³⁸

On August 9, 1972, Mr. Burns took a strong stand against the reelection of the strongest opponent of integration, Mr. Stewart Shaffer, in a commentary titled, "The Shaffer Slate, An Expose." It said in part that actions by

³⁵Ibid., May 9, 10, and 12, 1972.

³⁶Ibid., May 24, 1972.

³⁷Ibid., May 30, 1972.

³⁸Ibid., July 18, 1972.

that slate were, "Not at all strange for a slate that places ideology above progress, a slate that attacks proven Federal remedial programs as unnecessary, a slate that flies in the face of all evidence to the contrary to suggest that the Orange County School System is academically bankrupt."³⁹

August 14, 1972, brought an attack on Dr. Nye's recommendation that all black history books be removed from the schools. It called for the defeat of the "Shaffer Slate" that was supported by Dr. Nye.

On August 29, 1972, the commentary was titled "Education, A Community Problem." It was in support of the court ordered integration as the only solution to unequal schools.⁴⁰

Mr. Shaffer was defeated in the primary election.

The October 10 commentary was a plea for community support in the integration of the three additional schools; November 11 was a commentary in praise of the plan developed by Dr. Nye for integration; November 20 brought a plea for the prevention of the same disruptive conflict that had torn apart the community during the Robinswood-Carver pairing implementation; November 24 was in praise of the school board for listening to all the alternate plans developed by other citizens, then choosing the best plans for the inte-

³⁹Ibid., August 9, 1972.

⁴⁰Ibid., August 14, 1972.

gration of the elementary schools.⁴¹

On November 28, Mr. Burns felt the need to warn the community that the case was closed, that there was no advantage in following the "diatribes" of the Reverend John Butler Book, a radical segregationist.⁴²

The first of December brought a scathing attack on the Reverend Book. It said in part, "For you, Reverend Mr. John Butler Book, you and your rag-tag coterie of syncophants, your advice is morally and legally bankrupt; your intentions are suspect and your theology is woefully deficient. It's about time you informed your followers that occasionally the answer to the prayers of even the Pharisee is simply NO."⁴³

December 12 brought a "Suggested Change In Direction." It was a proposal for a bi-racial citizens advisory council to be named from the residents of the areas involved in the desegregation process.⁴⁴

TELEVISION

Neither Channel 6, WDBO-TV, nor Channel 9, WFTV, have a policy of commenting or editorializing as part of their news productions. Channel 2, WESH-TV, had one edit-

⁴¹Ibid., October 10, 1972.

⁴²Ibid., November 28, 1972.

⁴³Ibid., December 1, 1972.

⁴⁴Ibid., December 12, 1972.

orial on the conflict brought about by the school integration process in Orange County. That was broadcast on May 10, 1972, after the requested transfer of Dr. Moffet and Mr. Casscadden and the resignations of Mr. Higginbotham and Mr. Tompkins as Superintendent of schools and chairman of the school board. It called for the resignations of the remaining school board members so that the governor could appoint a full new board to remove all traces of the dissension that had forced the resignations and transfers.⁴⁵

SUMMARY

The strongest editorial stand was taken by WKIS radio through the Gene Burns commentaries. The stand was pro integration, and against the strongest opponents of integration. Some members of the school system believe that Mr. Burns' commentaries were at least partly responsible for Mr. Shaffer's defeat in the primary elections. The most surprising aspect of these commentaries is that in spite of the commentaries, his strongest opponents in People Power can say that he really knows what he is saying and that they were treated fairly by Mr. Burns. Only one man, Mr. Roy Berryman, a school board member who voted with Mr. Shaffer, took a very strong position against Mr. Burns.

The Sentinel editorial stand was that the integration order was unfortunate, but it wasn't Judge Young's

⁴⁵ Editorial, WESH-TV, May 10, 1972.

fault; President Nixon would help the situation by changing the character of the Supreme Court and Congress would pass a constitutional amendment.

The Corner Cupboard editorial position started out with the stand that bussing was temporary, don't be alarmed, and moved from there to worries about the cost of bussing, then to questioning compulsory schooling.

The Sun of Pine Hills took a stand in favor of Mr. Shaffer's opposition to the courts and the rest of the school board, in favor of the Council of Parents, who were bringing charges of malfeasance and law suits against the school board, and in favor of People Power. The stand appeared to change somewhat late in 1972 after it was found that some parents supported the teachers and principal at Carver.

The only television editorial on the subject was taken by Channel 2 in calling for the rest of the school board to resign.

Chapter 8

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE, THE COURTS AND THE SCHOOL BOARD

The comparison of the content of the court records for Ellis v. the Orange County School Board, the minutes of the Orange County School Board meetings, and the content of the newspaper coverage for the period immediately after the production of new events by the court or the school board reveals some interesting discrepancies. Of 98 total items, eleven were not covered by any of the four newspapers. The items that were not reported seem to relate either to the actions of the Court, or the actions of the black community.

The first of the items not covered was a large folder of petitions from the Carver area requesting that:

1. The Court reject the School Board plan for closing Eccleston and Carver.
2. Black citizens be involved in the formulation of future plans.
3. Any use of busses that would be necessary for achieving integration should require as many white children to be transferred as black children. Bussing should be two way, not one way.

The stack of petitions was approximately two inches thick and there were ten signatures on each petition. The total

number of signatures was not listed, but there appeared to be at least one thousand, probably more. Judge Young considered the content of these petitions, filed September 16, 1971, when he declared that it was not feasible to convert Eccleston and Carver into a special education complex as proposed by the Board on September 14. Both CORE and NAACP condemned the proposed conversion as well as the closing of Webster Street School and Holden Avenue School; but these actions were not reported in any of the four papers.¹

On September 22, 1971, the School Board accepted the Court-ordered integration that included closing Holden and Webster schools, but rejected the ordered clustering of Carver, Westridge and Robinswood Junior High Schools pending the appeal to the Fifth Circuit Court in New Orleans. This meeting was not covered in any of the papers.²

On September 27, 1971, three groups of parents filed a class action suit to prevent the closing of Webster School in Winter Park. The reasons given for the closing were reported when the plan was presented, but the action of parents opposed to the closing was not reported until October 7.

¹Ellis v. the Orange County School Board, U. S. Dist. Ct., Mid. Dist., Fla. 1215 Orlando Civil, Sept. 16, 1971.

²Orange County School Board Minutes, September 22, 1971.

then only in the Corner Cupboard.³

On October 6, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals granted the School Board appeal to reduce the clustering of Robinswood, Carver and Westridge Junior High Schools to the pairing of Robinswood and Carver. Only when Judge Young of the District Court had approved the change in his plans did the papers finally mention the approved changes.⁴

At the School Board meeting of October 25, Stewart Shaffer and Roy Berryman proposed that the School Board not defend itself against a suit filed by Robinswood parents to prevent the use of busses to transport students who lived within two miles of an accredited school. Mr. Higginbotham stated that defense was necessary. The motion was not passed. This meeting received no coverage in any paper.⁵

In the November 8 School Board meeting, a motion was passed in favor of a constitutional amendment to oppose bussing. The meeting was not reported in the papers.⁶

On February 10, 1972, the School Board passed the following resolution: "The right of a student to attend the Public School nearest his place of residence shall not be abridged for reasons of race, color, national origin,

³Ellis, September 27, 1971.

⁴Ibid., October 6, 1971.

⁵School Board, October 25, 1971.

⁶Ibid., November 8, 1971.

religion or sex." The reporters did not think that the resolution was significant enough to warrant space in the papers.⁷

On March 13, 1972, Stewart Shaffer requested the resignation of the law firm of Graham, Markle and Vaught because of Markle's recommendation that excluded the board members from participating in drawing the desegregation plan. Mr. Markle had no intention of resigning.⁸

At the same meeting Mr. Shaffer also called for the resignation of James Higginbotham as Superintendent of Schools because, in Mr. Shaffer's opinion, he had:

1. allowed Carver to become substandard.
2. denied and delayed producing requested information.
3. failed to remove supplemental materials that promoted class hatred.
4. allowed sensitivity training to be taught at Carver.

His motions were tabled. No reporters considered these charges to be of sufficient value to place in the paper.

On May 22, 1972, a special hearing was held to consider the transfer of Mr. Jewel Hooper from his position as principal of Robinswood Junior High because of the many difficulties encountered in the process of integrating a

⁷Ibid., February 10, 1972.

⁸Ibid., March 13, 1972.

formerly all-white school with a formerly all-black school. He had been accused of doing nothing while white children were assaulted and robbed. Some parents claimed that there were shakedowns and beatings while the teachers in charge watched but did nothing.⁹

Members of the PTA board from Robinswood spoke in defense of Mr. Hooper, but he was transferred to Cheney Elementary nonetheless; a status loss, and a financial loss. Neither the hearing nor the transfer were reported in the papers.

The next two unreported items concerned appeals against further integration and the granting of more time by the courts to plan further action in desegregating the schools of Orange County.¹⁰

The last unreported item was a statement before the Board by Barbara Owens of the Orange County Council of the PTA that the PTA did not support the school boycott which was being instigated by the People Power group.¹¹

COMPARISON OF SUBJECT COVERAGE BY PAPER; 1971

In the six months of 1971 that are considered in this study, the Orlando Sentinel or the Star covered all of the court developments except the petitions against closing

⁹Ibid., May 22, 1972.

¹⁰Ellis, August 8, 1972.

¹¹School Board, December 18, 1972.

Eccleston and Carver, the appeal against closing Webster, and the granting of the appeal that Robinswood and Carver be paired rather than cluster Robinswood, Carver and Westwood. Usually the same item appeared in both papers. Sometimes the headline had been rewritten.

The Star did not report the memo of July 28, 1971, from Higginbotham to the Board that recommended further segregation relief would have to be planned by the Court as the School Board does not have expertise in matters sociological that are not related to sound educational principles.¹²

The Sentinel did not report the denial of the Board request for a delay in the date of school opening of September 3, 1971.¹³

After September 10, through the end of 1971, coverage of school integration was almost dropped from the Star.

Three items were covered in contrast to ten items in the Sentinel for the same time period. Only one item was a Star exclusive and that was the item about the Board vowing compliance with the integration order.¹⁴

The Pine Hills Sun provided little coverage of either the School Board meetings or the Court proceedings, but

¹²The Orlando Sentinel, July 29, 1971, Sec. B, p. 1.

¹³The Orlando Evening Star, September 3, 1971, Sec. A, p. 1.

¹⁴Ibid., September 20, 1971, Sec. A, p. 1.

reported mostly interviews and the activities of the Parent's Council during 1971. On September 9, the Sun reported an interview with James Higginbotham and quoted him as saying that there would be no crosstown bussing for either Pine Hills or Orla Vista.¹⁵ The rest of the 1971 coverage dealt mainly with the organization and actions of the Parent's Council, a group opposed to integration.

The Corner Cupboard also limited its coverage more to personal interviews and to organizations than to Court proceedings or School Board meetings. The organization that the Corner Cupboard followed was CORE instead of the Parent's Council. During 1971, Corner Cupboard coverage seemed to be more conciliatory than the other papers. On September 2 the editorial was headed, "Bussing is Temporary."¹⁶ On September 6 it quoted James Higginbotham as saying, "The CORE plan has merit." On the same date there was a picture on page 2 showing a black and a white child with the heading, "The New Generation is the Least Upset Over Integration."¹⁷ Judge Young was quoted as saying that blacks have a right to neighborhood schools as long as they didn't offend desegregation rules, in the September 20th

¹⁵The Sun of Pine Hills, September 9, 1971, p. 1.

¹⁶The Corner Cupboard, September 2, 1971, p. 7.

¹⁷Ibid., September 6, 1971, pp. 1-2.

edition.¹⁸ On September 27, Reverend Jack Mitchell was quoted as saying that court ordered bussing was a "Black 'Slap in the Face'."¹⁹

COMPARISON OF SUBJECT COVERAGE BY PAPER: 1972

From the end of October 1971 through May of 1972, there was very little coverage of school integration news carried in either the Sentinel or the Star. On January 17, 1972, the Sentinel carried an article titled, "Robinswood-Carver Pairing Working Despite Early Protests."²⁰ The next article didn't appear until April 12th when the front page carried headlines, "12 Month School Plan Ordered - closing of Carver a possibility." The article stated that the plan was calculated by Higginbotham to allow the closing of Carver. I was unable to determine the source of this information because the Sentinel was the only paper to carry the information, and it wasn't mentioned in either the court records or the school board minutes. The subject was not mentioned again.²¹

On May 5 the Sunday edition carried a full page article in the special 'Insight' section titled, "Bussing, a

¹⁸Ibid., September 20, 1971, p. 3.

¹⁹Ibid., September 27, p. 1.

²⁰Sentinel, January 17, 1972, Sec. B, p. 2.

²¹Ibid., April 12, 1972, Sec. A, p. 1.

Necessary Way of Life For Orange County Pupils." It stated that 38% of ninety thousand students were already riding busses.²²

On May 24 there was a small article on page 2B which was received from the Sentinel Washington Bureau stating that Orange County was charged by six civil rights groups with perpetuating segregation. This was the first hint in the media that the integration battle was not over. According to Mr. Mike Hardy of the NAACP, negotiations for further desegregation had been in progress for some time previous to May 24.²³

The next mention of integration in the Orlando Sentinel was a headline article on August 18, 1972 stating that the Court had added three Orange County Schools to the desegregation list. Since this was the decision of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, the decision was not recorded in the Ellis court records until August 21 when the School Board filed an appeal for reconsideration of the decision. Reactions of the members of the school administration are quoted as follows: "I am shocked," Dr. Nye, Acting Superintendent; Mr. Casscadden, Assistant Superintendent, "Here we go again."; Mr. Berryman, School Board member, "The Government should come do it themselves." The

²²Ibid., May 5, 1972, Sec. A, p. 18.

²³Statement by Michael Hardy, personal interview, July 29, 1973.

Court was quoted as saying that the schools involved had been part of the dual school system.²⁴ Between August 18 and December 31, when the final decision was handed down, there were twenty articles on school desegregation printed in the Sentinel. The last item on December 31 quoted Mr. Barnes, School Board member, as saying that the case was finally closed after ten years.²⁵ The case is not closed. In fact, there will be further litigation in the case according to Mr. Mike Hardy of the NAACP.²⁶

The Star had an article January 19, 1972, on the study being done by the Rollins College Sociology Department on the academic effects on students in integrated schools.²⁷

The next article was printed on April 11 and was a reported School Board meeting that dealt with complaints concerning both Robinswood and Carver. Mr. Higginbotham recommended closing Carver for the 1972-73 school year. In this same article it was announced that the courts may ask for a new mix plan that would involve cross bussing between schools. This article conflicts with the "shock" expressed over the possibility of new integration expressed August 21

²⁴Sentinel, August 18, 1972, Sec. A, p. 1.

²⁵Ibid., December 31, 1972, Sec. A, p. 1.

²⁶Hardy, interview.

²⁷Star, January 19, 1972, Sec. B, p. 1.

by Dr. Nye in the Orlando Sentinel.²⁸

Between August 19, 1972 and December 31, 1972, the Orlando Evening Star printed fourteen items about school integration. Thirteen of these items, except perhaps for headlines, were identical to items printed at the same time in the Orlando Sentinel. The Star reported only one item that did not appear in the Sentinel: a report of the filing of the new integration plan with the Court and of the boundaries for attendance affected by the new plan.

During the first six months of 1972, the majority of news related to school integration was reported only by the Corner Cupboard. The Corner Cupboard published fourteen stories, the Sun of Pine Hills covered seven, the Sentinel published four, and the Star only two. Ten of the fourteen items in the Corner Cupboard concerned racial conflict in the integrated schools. Two items were favorable reports about the Carver-Robinswood human relations workshops for parents and students, and two were reports of School Board meetings.

In the last half of 1972 the proportions were reversed. There were twenty items in the Sentinel, fourteen items in the Star, eleven items in the Sun, and ten items in the Corner Cupboard. The ten Cupboard items were mostly on the plans for further desegregation and the development and decline of the People Power organization.

²⁸Ibid., April 11, 1972, Sec. B, p. 1.

The Pine Hills Sun aligned itself with People Power and Stewart Shaffer in 1972 as it aligned itself with the Parent's Council in 1971. Of the eighteen items that the Sun published about the integration proceedings, six were editorials and were explored more in depth in chapter 7.

The human relations workshops for Carver-Robinswood parents and students that were praised as effective "balm" in the Corner Cupboard were condemned in the Sun as "sensitivity training" designed to divide parents from their children and break down opposition to forced bussing. Mr. Higginbotham was quoted as being opposed to sensitivity training and Stewart Shaffer was quoted as saying, "The whole idea is to break down your will."²⁹ This theme was repeated on June 3, 1972.

On March 2, the Sun reported that the Parent's Council had revealed student beatings at Carver. The article stated that a boy was knocked unconscious and a girl had her dress torn off while teachers stood by. According to the article, the teachers were afraid to use discipline, the curriculum was badly substandard and the daily papers were guilty of covering up the situation by using censorship and lies.³⁰

On April 13 the Sun reported "Bedlam at Robinswood Junior High." There were details of supposed beatings and

²⁹Sun, February 3, 1972, p. 1.

³⁰Ibid., March 2, 1972, p. 1.

shakedowns as teachers watched. Principal Jewel Hooper was quoted as saying that, "A boy was hit once - his assailant was suspended. The Parent's Council is trying to cause trouble." There were further complaints of lack of discipline and charges that Mr. Higginbotham was minimizing the situation. Another mother claimed her son had been sexually assaulted in the restroom. One boy had ants put down his shirt. The teachers were reported to be afraid to do anything.³¹

On May 25th the Sun article quoted James Higginbotham as stating that "The school trouble was hysteria. There were a half dozen other schools more volatile, but they didn't have anyone to stir up trouble." The Parent's Council requested plain clothes deputies to patrol the school.³²

The rest of the articles concerned the new integration order and the formation of People Power with their boycott of schools.

To sum up, there were ninety-eight total items. Eleven were not covered by any newspaper. There were forty-three items in the Sentinel, twenty-nine in the Star, thirty-six in the Corner Cupboard, and twenty-five in the Sun.

There were fifty-six items that were only covered by one paper. The eighteen Sentinel-only items were mostly

³¹Ibid., April 13, 1972, p. 1.

³²Ibid., May 25, 1972, p. 1.

concerned with court activities; the four Star-only items were human interest stories. The twenty-two Corner Cupboard-only items were reports of CORE activities or conflicts related to integration. The twelve items reported only in the Sun were related to accusations made by members of the Parent's Council or activities of the People Power anti-bussing group.

Only three items were reported in all four papers. These occurred in the middle of November, 1972, when Dr. Nye presented his desegregation plan, at the end of November when the school boycott was taking place and the December 12th Court hearing on Dr. Nye's integration plan.

The most complete job of covering the court hearings and the school board meetings was done by the Sentinel-Star. The Corner Cupboard did the best job of covering integration related organizations. The Sun focused mainly on the organizations and opinions of the people of the Pine Hills area.

The poorest job of covering organizations and individual opinion was done by the Sentinel.

The least adequate job of covering the entire story was done by the Sun of Pine Hills which presented only one point of view.

None of the papers analyzed presented the views of the NAACP, the reasons behind the push for integration, **nor** the condition of the schools to be integrated.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The media coverage of the integration of Orange County Schools was good from the point of view of the school administration. The opinions of the white middle class majority were also well reported. The media coverage from the point of view of the majority of the black community left much to be desired. These discrepancies will be explored more thoroughly in the following sections: media and the schools, media and the community organizations, and media and the courts.

MEDIA AND THE SCHOOLS

General conclusions about the principals' opinions of media coverage cannot be drawn from this study because of the restricted number of principals who were available for interviews. Of those who were available, two principals would not give usable opinions. Therefore, trends could be established from the available data, but definite conclusions could not be developed. It is interesting to note that of the six black principals approached, four agreed to the interview, one was out of town and only one refused the interview. Of six white principals approached, three agreed

to the interview, but two would not permit identification of themselves or their school. Of the other three, one was out of town and two refused an interview. One principal from each race did not give usable, factual data, but rather glossed over the facts to state that everything was fine, or that they could not answer the questions.

Mr. Howard, principal of Carver Junior High School, gave the same answer to all questions about the media, that everything was fine, everyone did a fine job. In discussing his answers with Dr. Moffet and Mr. Casscadden, the author was told that Mr. Howard and his school had taken such a beating at the hands of the media that it was no wonder he refused to give relevant answers.

The principal of Pine Hills School No. 2 may have been telling the truth when he said that he neither read nor listened to reports about the school system, but such a statement does not appear logical. It would take a great deal of effort to avoid reading or listening to news about the school system, especially in Pine Hills.

Three of the school administrators felt that sensational news coverage was one main cause of conflict in school integration. The other reasons included economic factors, fear of the unknown, loss of personal freedom and forcing children to ride busses.

Three of the principals and seven of the school administrators gave the Sentinel Star a good to excellent rating, and they included Mrs. Dorothy Madlee in their

praise. Mrs. Madlee's statement that she didn't talk to many people because it might spoil her objectivity, and Mr. Gene Burn's statement that Mrs. Madlee only reported the administration view, would indicate that the view of the Sentinel was the view of the majority of the school board and the school administration.

The fact that three principals and eight administrators considered the coverage of the Corner Cupboard to be very poor would indicate that the Corner Cupboard did not report the story from the school board point of view. Mr. McCarthy, editor of the Corner Cupboard, stated that he did not allow his reporters to attend confidential press conferences at the school offices, but directed them to seek the information elsewhere. This would not be conducive to good relations between the school board and the Corner Cupboard. The Corner Cupboard reported incidents that were not reported in other papers and were critical of school action.¹

Of five principals and four administrators who were familiar with the coverage of the Sun of Pine Hills, two principals and two administrators thought the coverage was fair to good. One was Mr. Howard, whose answers must be discounted. The others were residents of the Pine Hills area. Of those not from Pine Hills, three principals and

¹Corner Cupboard, October 14, 1971, page 1; November 8, 1971, p. 1; November 20, 1971, p. 1; February 3, 1972, p. 1; February 10, 1972, p. 1; February 17, 1972, p. 1; February 28; March 23; etc.

two administrators believed the Sun did a very poor job. From these facts and from other observations it would be safe to assume that the Sun reflects the views of the majority from the Pine Hills area, but not necessarily the views of the school administration or other areas of the county. As the Sun is printed specifically to serve the people of the Pine Hills area, any other stand would not allow the Sun to continue publication for very long.

Of the television channels, Channel 9 received the most favorable comments, with one principal and four administrators rating it good to excellent. Two principals rated it fair and one administrator rated it poor. The author was unable to determine what Mr. Higginbotham was referring to when he accused Channel 9 and James Alston of "not knowing the score." His reference to books on the shelves would indicate the memo directing removal of black history and black literature from the shelves of all school libraries. Since the author was not permitted to talk to anyone at Channel 9, the mystery must remain. Mr. Higginbotham would not be more specific.

Channel 6 received a similar number of good comments, but Channel 6 received four poor ratings as opposed to two poor ratings for Channel 9.

Channel 2 received the poorest ratings on coverage of School Board news. This can be explained by the fact that Channel 2 has transmitters in both Orlando and Daytona Beach; therefore, it covers almost twice as much territory

as the other two channels. In covering the larger area, the importance of any local news will be diluted.

WKIS, and particularly Mr. Gene Burns, received excellent ratings from the school administrators. This is surprising as Mr. Burns is on record in his commentaries as opposing three members of the school board, working strongly for the defeat of Stewart Shaffer, and opposing strongly such administrative actions as the removal of black oriented books from the shelves, the proposed closing of Carver and Eccleston, and the proposed appointment of Dr. Nye as permanent superintendent of schools. The Sentinel took a neutral stand with the removal of books and the closing of Carver, and endorsed Mr. Shaffer's candidacy.

It is interesting to note that WOKB claims to be the black oriented radio station in Central Florida, but none of the black principals was familiar with its news format. The fact that it is white owned, and only orients to the black community through the type of music and announcements of black community civic events, would discount its effectiveness in influencing any major sociological changes within the black community.

Four of the principals and four of the school administrators rated reporters as poorly informed regarding the background of school problems. This was compounded with complaints about the frequent reassignment of personnel covering the school news. The media idea that a good reporter should be able to cover any occurrence is valid only if

the reporter has the time and energy to thoroughly research the background of complicated social changes before reporting them in any depth. There is no evidence, except in the case of Mr. Gene Burns and Mr. Jerry Gentleman, that any of the reporters had such a background or did such research.

Mrs. Dorothy Madlee stated that she got her information from the school board meetings or occasional interviews with the superintendent of schools or his assistants. She also stated that she avoided talking to many people for fear it would interfere with her objectivity. She gave no indication of research into the background of the case. She did not interview other interested individuals, such as members of the NAACP or CORE. She gave no indication of awareness of the reasons behind the NAACP suits for integration.

Mr. McCarthy of the Corner Cupboard indicated that he had his reporters seek information from other sources than the school administrators, but there was no evidence to indicate any special training or experience that would assist them in understanding the complicated school situation.

Neither the news director of WDBO-TV nor the news director of WESH-TV gave any indication that any of their reporters had special training or experience for covering school news. Todd Persons of WDBO-TV suggested that one of his reporters was qualified because he was black and therefore could present the black point of view more accurately.

This was the only indication he gave of special qualifications for reporting the integration story.

Mr. Jerry Gentleman was hired as a newsman for radio station WLOF because of his qualifications as a school news reporter. He had been education editor for a newspaper in Indiana that covered not one, but seven school boards. He had also covered school news in Pensacola, Florida, before coming to Orlando. School news is not a full-time assignment, but he covers all school news for WLOF.

Mr. Gene Burns discussed what he believed to be minimal research for covering school news. He stated that the reporter who is responsible for school news should attend every school board meeting for background information and understanding of the school operations. For the coverage of integration problems in Orange County, a reading of the court records of the last two or three years of the Ellis case is mandatory. He commented that most representatives of the media did not seek out the opinions and motives of the black community. Both CORE and the NAACP should have been able to present their ideas, but such was not usually the case. He stated that most of the media did not send informed reporters and did not live up to their responsibility to uncover events as they were developing. The author agrees with his opinions.

Mrs. Madlee and Ms. Lang of the Orlando Sentinel stated that they reported what went on at meetings and did not attend all the meetings. The news directors of WESH-TV,

WDBO-TV and WDBO radio all stated that they had no one assigned to cover school developments and did not regularly assign a reporter unless a big news break was expected.

The problem of assigning personnel to the school beat is a difficult problem to solve. Turnover of personnel seems quite frequent in the media. Over half of the personnel who covered the integration proceedings were gone six months later. The three reporters who were assigned to school coverage by the Corner Cupboard had all left town. Mr. Gentleman of WLOF had only been on the assignment for six months of the time period of this study.

None of the principals and only two of the school administrators made any attempts to contact the media. The principals believed relations with the media to be the duty of the school administration. The administration did not see the necessity of contacting the media except on one occasion by Mr. Higginbotham during the height of the integration controversy, and by Mr. Shaffer when he wanted to present an opinion contrary to the opinions of the rest of the board.

The principals believed that PTA meetings and school bulletins were an effective form of communication and used them exclusively unless contacted by a member of the media. Three administrators used meetings other than the PTA or board meetings as communication methods. One principal belonged to the Chamber of Commerce Task Force on Education and believed that it was successful in communicating with

the public.

Two of the principals believed that organizations opposing the court ordered integration received too much publicity; two thought the coverage was fair and two were not familiar with the coverage. The amount of coverage given to People Power and CORE was much greater than that given to the NAACP, which was the only organization favoring the integration. The reasons for the NAACP suit for integration were voiced only by Mr. Gene Burns of WKIS and Mr. Jerry G. Gentleman of WLOF. The Sentinel, the Corner Cupboard, the Sun of Pine Hills, Channels 2, 6, and 9, WDBO radio and WOKB radio did not present the NAACP facts at all. This would indicate that those opposed to integration received an unfair advantage in the media presentations regarding integration. More will be said of the NAACP position in the section of this chapter dealing with community organizations.

The problem of confidentiality mentioned by Mr. Casscadden and Mrs. Davies was echoed by Mr. McCarthy of the Corner Cupboard. He spoke of school briefing sessions that were supposed to remain confidential until the school administration decided to release the news. He stated that his reporters were not permitted to attend those sessions because if they obtained the same information from another source, they still could not release it. It is possible that the staff of Channel 6 obtained the news of schools to be integrated from two sources instead of just the confiden-

tial briefing session. It would appear from the statements of Mrs. Davies and Mr. Casscadden that such sessions occurred before the school board members had been briefed. If they were, the sessions would be a serious breach of confidence between the administration and the board. This breach of confidence could be explained by Florida's government in the sunshine law that forbids public decision-making without access to the public. Such briefing sessions are not a necessity, and therefore should be discontinued in order to improve relations with the board and with the media. Because more final information can be given at a news conference when the news is ready for release, the value of the confidential briefings is doubtful at best.

MEDIA AND THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

The community organizations whose leaders were interviewed had all taken a public stand either for or against transported integration.

NAACP

All three members of the NAACP agree the conflict over integration was caused by the unwillingness of the white community to change from segregated to integrated facilities.

In spite of the sensational approach of the Corner Cupboard, two members of the NAACP believed its coverage to be better than that of the Sentinel because it carried news

of the black community. The Sentinel Star was perceived as the voice of the white community, with little or no concern for the black community. Mrs. Wright's statement that to ignore important events is as damaging as unfair reports has a great deal of truth in it. Mr. Hardy's statement that a community paper should serve the entire community is also valid. Mr. Woolfork's charge that, "If it isn't deliberately distorted, at least it isn't as accurate as it could be," describes the coverage of the NAACP suit for integration.

Channel 9 was praised by Mr. Hardy and Mrs. Wright because of the coverage given to integration by a young black reporter who "knew what to look for."

Mr. Woolfork objected to the emotional connotations in two phrases used repeatedly by the media. The first was "mix" instead of integration. The other was the term "racial balance." He said that the NAACP never had sought, nor ever intended to seek, a "racial balance." The words, though common in media reports, were not used in any of the legal suits for integration. Instead of "racial balance," the NAACP was only seeking equality of opportunity. Mr. Hardy stated that the fact that \$12,000 had to be spent on Carver before white children could attend it was proof of the inequality. The \$12,000 was mentioned only once in the print media, and that was in a back page article on preparations for integration published by the Sentinel. No explanations of reasons was given. The media gave CORE an importance

greater than what was warranted by small membership and small financial support.

There is no evidence in any of the media coverage that the position of the NAACP on integration was explained. Only two members of the media admitted being knowledgeable about the NAACP position. As stated above, this would indicate a lack of coverage for the NAACP position.

CORE

CORE evidently has a small membership. This conclusion is based on statements by Mr. Hardy and Mr. Woolfork quoted above, but also on a statement by Mrs. Owens of the Orange County Council of PTA, that she has never been able to identify over twelve members of CORE. Mr. Reed, Assistant Mayor of Eatonville, Florida, a local delegate to the national CORE organization, complained that black professionals do not join CORE. In commenting on unforeseen problems with the media, he complained that black magazines did not present the CORE side of issues.

These statements would tend to support Mr. Hardy's charge that CORE is a creature of the media. It certainly could not be, or should not be, presented as it has been in the media as representing the black point of view. The only reason for such presentation is the wishful approach that blacks prefer segregation, which is not born out by the opinion of those interviewed, nor by the opinion of other persons the author knows.

People Power

CORE members were present at the organization of People Power as well as at the organization of the Parent's Council Against Bussing. Their presence was noted in the media releases, but they were seldom represented at subsequent meetings, according to Mr. Heckle and Mrs. Polsley of People Power and Mr. Ryder of the Parent's Council.

The greatest effect that the media had on People Power was in the coverage given to the appointment of the Rev. John Butler Book as chairman of the organization. Many Pine Hills parents joined People Power to protest transported integration. When the Rev. Mr. Book started his racist approach, half the membership walked out and did not return. This was thoroughly covered in the media. The organization died slowly from that point. This was admitted by both Mr. Heckle and Mrs. Polsley. Even the Sun of Pine Hills became negative in its coverage of People Power from the time of that event.

Mr. Heckle was the only person interviewed in this study who admitted he had tried to manufacture news. He believed that because he called the media for unimportant things, they ignored the "big" story of Mrs. Polsley's trip to Washington seeking relief from the court ordered integration.

The fact that Gene Burns and WKIS were ranked as the best by both Mr. Heckle and Mrs. Polsley would indicate

that his caustic commentaries are impartial. To be seen as knowledgeable and well informed by both those who advocate and those who oppose integration is a surprising feat, and perhaps testifies to his impartiality.

PTA

The comments from the PTA leaders, in many instances, mirrored the comments of the school administration. This is understandable, as the PTA is a school-affiliated organization.

Mrs. Owens was the only white person interviewed who recognized that CORE membership was probably low, and that media coverage of CORE exaggerated its importance.

Mrs. Owens possibly shed light on Mr. Casscadden's complaint about WLOF inciting school disruption. She mentioned the report that Oak Ridge was in the midst of a riot when she was there and there was no truth in it. She believes such inaccuracies lead to no information, which is as bad as wrong information.

The special on bussing that was mentioned by Mrs. Owens was carried by Channel 9, according to Mr. Walker of Channel 2. More information on the special was unavailable because of the unavailability of the personnel of Channel 9. This special could have been on Mr. Higginbotham's mind when he charged that Channel 9 offended by not knowing the situation.

MEDIA AND THE COURTS

Nowhere in our society is the freedom of the media so restricted as it is within our court system. No cameras or other recording devices are permitted inside the court room while court is in session. The presiding judge does not discuss the case with anyone. Reporters may attend the sessions, but information must be hand written and pictures must be drawn rather than photographed. The court records are open to the public, but are frequently complicated and difficult to analyze. Attorneys are sometimes available for comment but are under no obligation to give interviews.

In the case of Ellis v. the Board of Public Instruction, Mr. Woolfork, the attorney for the NAACP, stated that because of being misquoted too many times, he would not talk to members of the media. Mr. Markel, the school board attorney, resigned November 23, 1972, at the height of the integration controversy and would grant no interviews related to school problems. Therefore his opinions could not be part of this paper. Mr. Markel was quoted frequently by the Orlando Sentinel, but was quoted less frequently in the Corner Cupboard and the Sun. It cannot be determined whether he refused interviews by the other papers or whether the other papers did not seek as many interviews.

The court hearings of the Ellis case were well covered by the media. The interim proceedings such as appeals by CORE or the petitions of the black community

regarding the closing of Eccleston and Carver were not well reported. There was little evidence that the reporters read the court records, though they did attend the hearings.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

From the above information the author draws the following conclusions.

1. The main subject and direction of the media reports was the view of the white majority that integration is an evil that will be agreed to only with reluctance after every other alternative has been exhausted. This was the view of the school board and the majority of the community organizations included in this study. Editorials and commentaries, with the exception of Gene Burns' commentaries, also suggested that integration was an evil to be avoided or acceded to reluctantly if all recourse failed. The Sentinel went so far as to suggest that the only hope was that President Nixon would appoint enough new members to the Supreme Court and thus get the laws changed. This is hardly objective, unbiased reporting. The reports on the stand of CORE, another organization against integration, were written to make CORE appear as the organization that represented the black community. The absence of reports about the NAACP would tend to reinforce the idea that the NAACP was not an important organization. This idea was also reinforced by references to the NAACP attorney from New York. Members of the NAACP in Orlando were not interviewed nor photographed

for the media except for attorney Woolfork, the local NAACP attorney. The impression given in the media reports was that no one, white or black, in Orlando wanted integration; that the push toward integration came from the NAACP defense fund from New York; and that all support should be given to those who were trying to avoid integration.

2. Background information on the condition of segregated education was completely missing from the media reports. There were no articles or newscasts devoted to the state of maintenance in the all-black schools. There were no reports about lack of or poor facilities. There were no reports on the statements made to the author about black principals feeling that they should refund part of their school funds to the school board each year. Mr. Shaffer tried to get the media to report on the test score differences between the all-black schools and the white schools, but even that received little coverage. The fact that such scores were on tests that were standardized for white middle class children and carry a strong cultural bias was never mentioned. There were no news stories or pictures about the all-black schools that were closed rather than send white children to them. There was no mention in the media about the disproportionate number of black children who were being bussed into white neighborhoods in the first stages of integration. In short, the black side of the story received very poor coverage.

3. The media did not, in any appreciable way, con-

tribute to the development on conflict. Even the inflammatory articles in the Sun of Pine Hills did not cause much increase in violence, if any. The reports of violence carried in the Sun were not substantiated nor reported in any other paper. Mr. Ryder, the editor of the Sun, stated that some reports from parents were not accurate. It seems that he printed reports from parents. There was very little actual violence in the whole period of this study. The conflict remained in the talking stage with threats and rumors. Even threats and rumors died out soon after integration became a fact and people realized that their fears were mostly groundless.

4. The death of People Power as an anti-integration organization could probably be attributed to media coverage of several of their largest meetings. The Reverend John Butler Book, the fundamentalist preacher who was going to save the white children by any means including violence, received full media coverage. The people of Orlando were willing to fight integration by any legal means, but they were not willing to follow the Reverend Mr. Book. Both the officers of People Power and some members of the media agree that Mr. Book and the media coverage of his leadership killed People Power as a strong organization. It lost half its membership after the first reports about Rev. Book and the membership declined from that point. Financial support also dwindled from that time.

5. There is some evidence, though not enough to

form solid conclusions, that the defeat of Stewart Shaffer in the school board elections of 1972 was influenced by the media coverage of his conduct at the board meetings. Mr. Shaffer tried to use the media to present his minority school board opinion of how the integration problem should be handled. His conflict with Mr. Higginbotham over the integration question was covered extensively in the Sentinel. Mr. Gene Burns began campaigning for the defeat of the "Shafer slate" in July for the November elections. Mr. Shafer was defeated by a wide majority. It could be assumed that at least part of that majority made their decision because of the media coverage of his actions during the integration process.

6. The complaint of the school administration that the majority of the reporters were poorly informed about the integration situation is valid. The statements made by the news directors of WDBO, WDBO-TV, WESH-TV, and by the editor of the Sentinel West that a good reporter can cover anything does not acknowledge the research necessary for in-depth reporting of complicated social issues. It would seem to be more logical to allow one reporter to become well acquainted with the background facts and the personalities involved, even if that reporter also had to cover other areas. WLOF and WKIS do not have larger staffs than the other media studied, but one reporter is assigned to school news from each of these stations. The size of the staff does not preclude the assignment of staff to the area of greatest interest or

ability.

The author concludes that the individual principals neither sought nor wanted media coverage of the integration of their schools. This was particularly true of the white principals who were more reluctant to participate in this study than were the black principals. Both junior high principals received rough treatment from the media during the integration of their schools. Mr. Hooper, who was demoted because of the problems that evolved out of integration, was more willing to participate in this study than was Mr. Howard, who still retained his job. The author believes that if more emphasis could be placed on the positive aspects of school news in the media reports; if the principals were not afraid of the negative being emphasized to the exclusion of positive reports, then the principals would be more cooperative with the media and in answering questions related to media coverage.

8. It could be concluded from this study that the school administration point of view was reported so well that most other points of view were excluded. The school administration stated that the schools were integrated enough and that further integration would be detrimental to good education. Only WKIS and, occasionally, the Corner Cupboard gave any other point of view in the early stages of integration. During the last six months of this study period WLOF joined in presenting other views.

9. If, before the Brown decision by the Supreme

Court, the media had attempted to show the inequality of segregated education; if children of all races had been treated equally; if all races had received equal justice, then transported integration would not have been necessary. Bussing is the price we pay for our bigotry. This is the story that has not been reported in the media; this is the untold basis of our conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Improvements by the Media

1. Although the view of the majority deserves the greatest share of media time or space; and even though the principles of selective attention and perception may conflict with communication of ideas; the views of minority groups should have a voice in the media of the community. When events are reported, time or space should be allowed for the presentation of more than one view of a subject, even though this might necessitate coverage of fewer subjects or more time allotted to news.

2. Because of the restrictions of time, television and radio stations could use periods when there are few major news stories, such as Sunday evening, to present the minority view of events or the necessary background to events that are of an on-going nature.

3. More space and research time should be devoted by members of all media to background information. Research into the court records related to the integration

decision would have given a much different view of the reports on integration. The attitude that the court order was unexpected, unnecessary and not in the best interests of the black community shows a lack of research into the reasons behind the court order, as well as a lack of knowledge about the conditions existing in the black schools. Both the court orders and the conditions in the black community should have been more completely researched. In the future, more time and more personnel should be assigned to research on the background of major news events.

4. Knowledge of preceding events and knowledge of personalities is necessary to do a complete job of reporting. If all media personnel cover all kinds of events, it is a waste of talent and interest as well as a waste of research time needed for complete coverage. Every medium with more than one reporter can divide assignments according to the interests and abilities of the reporters. The frequent rotation of personnel covering an on-going story (the Ellis case is over ten years old), destroys the continuity of reporting. People involved in the on-going event are more likely to communicate in depth with a reporter they know than one they don't know. If rotation is necessary, two reporters should cover the same subject area, then be rotated one at a time to maintain continuity.

5. Conflict and unpleasant subjects need to be reported. The main guideline should be that such conflict is checked carefully to determine the actual truth. Vague

charges that conflict has occurred without substantiation of such charges can do much damage. The Corner Cupboard and the Sun of Pine Hills apparently were lax in this matter.

Recommendations for Improvements of School-Media Relations

1. The school system should work with the media in presenting an accurate, balanced view of all the schools. Weaknesses should be discussed along with possible solutions for the weaknesses. If the public sees the schools attempting to hide weaknesses and areas needing improvement, public confidence in the school system will be more damaged than if such weaknesses are openly discussed.

2. The appointment by Dr. Deck, the new superintendent of Orange County Schools, of an experienced reporter to handle the dissemination of school related news is in line with the recommendations of the author.

3. The availability of the school superintendent or someone empowered to speak in his behalf is essential to good relations with the media.

4. Secret briefing sessions on future school events do not appear to have much advantage either for the media or for the schools. Such sessions should be discontinued.

5. Schools affect a larger proportion of the population than any other governmental body within the county. School representatives should be aware of this in determining what to present to the media. Because of this, they should

encourage the media management to hire reporters who have an educational background for school coverage.

6. More effort should be expended by the schools in contacting the media about developing news instead of waiting for the media to contact the members of the school system.

Recommendations for Community Leaders

1. "Manufacturing" news, as described by Mr. Heckle of People Power, should be avoided. It may increase the amount of coverage for a short time but diminishes the strength of later real news.

2. Community organizations, both school-related and civic organizations, should sponsor a yearly workshop for officers and public relations charimen in order to teach new officers the essentials of dealing with the media, such as what constitutes news, how to write a press release, timing releases for the greatest chance of publication, etc. If Mrs. Owens had had such training, more PTA news might have been published.

3. New organizations should use news releases or brochures to acquaint the members of the media with their purposes and goals if their goals are important enough to affect the community.

4. News releases should be carefully screened for accuracy and relevancy for the community. If the release is at all inaccurate or irrelevant, it should not be given to the media.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FOR THE MEDIA

1. What determined the importance of school news for inclusion in your reports?
2. What, in your opinion, is the basic cause of conflict in the school integration process?
3. (for editors and news directors,) What reporters have you assigned to the school beat?
4. What kind of cooperation did you receive in your efforts to gain information from, 1. the school officials and 2. community leaders?
5. Was the information you received from each source accurate and complete? How did you determine this?
6. What other sources of information did you use other than school officials and community leaders?
7. Did you feel morally required to withhold any information?
8. Did you or your reporters receive any unpleasant repercussions from their coverage of school integration?
9. Would you please comment on the coverage provided by the other media; newspapers, radio, and television?
10. In your opinion, did the media coverage change the course of events? How?
11. Do you have any suggestions for better media coverage of school news in the future?
12. Is there anything else that you feel should be said that has not been covered in these questions?

QUESTIONS FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

1. In your opinion, what was the basic cause of conflict in school integration?
2. Please comment on the coverage your news received from each of the following newspapers; 1. the Orlando Sentinel, 2. the Orlando Evening Star, 3. the Corner Cupboard, and 4. the Sun of Pine Hills.
3. Please comment on the coverage your news received from each of the following television channels; WESH-TV Channel 2, WDBO-TV Channel 6, and WFTV Channel 9.
4. Please comment on the coverage your news received from the following radio stations: WOKB, WLOF, WDBO, and WKIS.
5. Do the reporters who cover school news understand enough of the background, strength and weaknesses of your (school/organization) to do an adequate job of reporting?
6. What efforts did you make to communicate with the media?
7. Besides the media, what other efforts did you make to get your information to the public?
8. Please comment on the treatment received from the media by those who are opposed to your position.
9. Is there any other subject concerning school integration coverage that has not been discussed?
10. Did you meet any unexpected difficulties in your dealings with the media?

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